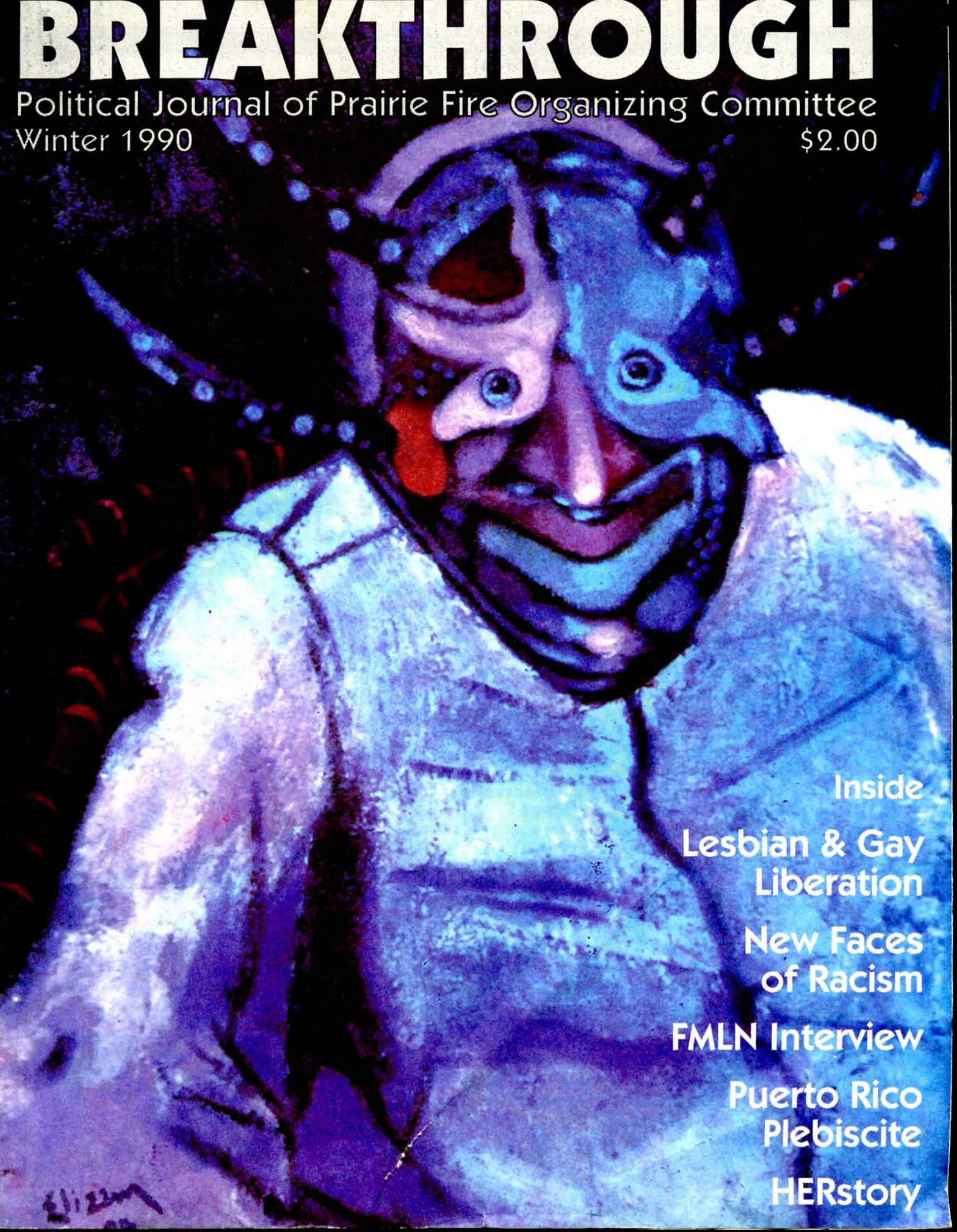


BREAKTHROUGH

Political Journal of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee

Winter 1990

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Inside

Lesbian & Gay
Liberation

New Faces
of Racism

FMLN Interview

Puerto Rico
Plebiscite

HERstory

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Cover art: El Vejigante, by Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, Elizam Escobar. Originally an image of the African Moors in Spain, the vejigante—a masked dancing figure in the religious festivals of Loiza, the predominantly Black region of Puerto Rico—represents rebellion against the cultural domination of colonialism.



Panama Drugs, Propaganda & Interventions

“CENTRAL AMERICA HAS ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THAT THOSE governments which we recognize and support stay in power, while those which we do not recognize and support fall.” This proclamation by the Undersecretary of State explains, in the clearest terms, the persistent U.S. doctrine of intervention in Panama, Nicaragua, El Salvador—in fact, anywhere in Latin America or the Caribbean that its interests may be threatened. The official was Robert Olds, the year 1927, and the Marines had just landed in Nicaragua to fight the guerrilla forces of Augusto Cesar Sandino. It was the 15th direct U.S. military intervention in Central America—if you count the nearly constant Marine presence in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1932 as a single twenty-year-long intervention.

Bush's decision to use 25,000 U.S. troops to overthrow General Manuel Noriega and to install another U.S. client government in Panama continues this sordid history. Some of the excuses were familiar, reminiscent of Grenada and a score of earlier interventions: U.S. lives and property were in danger; we were freeing an enslaved people from a cruel dictatorship. When it comes to interventions to oust despots, the State Department changes its tune to fit the circumstances. No country was more vociferous than the U.S. in condemning Vietnam's 1979 intervention to free the Kampuchean people of the Pol Pot regime which had taken three million lives.

Panama introduced a new twist to the standard interventionist rhetoric. We weren't deposing a head of state, we were just apprehending a drug dealer. According to the Pentagon line, Noriega had “graduated from a narco-trafficker indicted in the United States to a narco-terrorist ... [who could] in the long run ... have given the United States a tremendous challenge in this area.” The nearly hysterical level of U.S. public support for this invasion is based on precisely this formulation. With concern about illegal drugs, particularly crack cocaine, at a fever pitch in the U.S., any linkage of narcotics trafficking with U.S. foreign policy objectives is an instant success.

With the invasion underway, Pentagon psy-ops experts released a barrage of stories, reeking of racist and colonialist overtones. The media, revving up beyond its usual level of sensationalism, fed this undiluted to the public, informing us about Noriega's occult practices, red underwear to ward off the evil eye, vats of blood and animal entrails, and tamales containing the names of enemies. Radio DJ's in San Francisco embarked on what seemed to be a personal crusade to mobilize mass sentiment against Noriega, by encouraging listeners to call in their suggestions for rock songs to blare at the Vatican Embassy where Noriega was seeking refuge.

With the capture of Noriega and his extradition to Miami, the U.S. reverted to imperial practices not seen for 2,000 years, and international law be damned. A senior lawyer for the World Court was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, “It was like the Romans leading back defeated leaders and taking them to the circus to be displayed.”

Unfortunately, many people in the anti-intervention movement seem to have accepted this line at face value, judging from the low level response to the invasion. Noriega may well be a sleazy character, but this rationale for trampling on the sovereignty of a nation plays directly into the hands of U.S. counter-insurgency strategy.

“Narco-terrorism” is rapidly emerging as the new improved bogeyman of U.S. foreign policy, replacing the outdated Soviet threat. In a recent article in *Military Review*, U.S. Col. John D. Waghelstein, a leading exponent of low intensity warfare strategy, wrote:

"...making the connection in the American public's mind and Congress between drugs and revolutionary insurgency, would lead to the necessary support to counter the guerrilla/narcotic terrorists in this hemisphere. Generating that support would be relatively easy once the connection was proven and an all-out war was declared... Those church and academic groups that have slavishly supported insurgency in Latin America would find themselves on the wrong side of the moral issue."

For several years now, the U.S. propaganda machine has been following exactly this prescription, busily linking the revolutionary governments in Cuba and Nicaragua with drugs. Similar allegations have been made about revolutionary organizations in Peru and Colombia. On an operational level, U.S. military forces have participated in coca eradication combat missions in Bolivia and Peru. In September of 1989, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney ordered all U.S. military commanders to develop plans for a major military campaign against drug trafficking. The proposed Navy aircraft carrier battle group to be permanently deployed off the coast of Colombia to enforce an air and naval blockade against drug smugglers was one result (nixed by the Colombian government in the wake of Panama). And in December, the Pentagon tested public reaction to a direct commitment of U.S. ground troops based on the anti-drug strategy by going after Noriega.

But Panama has little to do with stopping the flow of drugs. The CIA routinely utilizes drug dealers as some of their most valued agents from Southeast Asia's Golden Triangle to the contras in Nicaragua. If Noriega was a drug trafficker, he was also the U.S.'s "man in Panama" since the Eisenhower administration.

No, the U.S. invasion of Panama has much more to do with asserting U.S. control over Latin America, in general, and the Panama Canal, in particular. The Canal Zone was created under the watchful guns of two U.S. navy vessels as a vital trade route for U.S. business. Since the first treaty between the U.S. and Panama in 1903, the U.S. has resisted allowing Panamanian control of the canal. Maintaining U.S. control required no less than five invasions between 1908 and 1925.

The canal also occupies a strategic military location. Five hundred feet above it sits the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), managing 14 U.S. bases throughout Latin America and overseeing the militarization of Central America. SOUTHCOM's School of the Americas (also known as the School of Coups), until it was moved in 1985, was responsible for the training of 45,000 Latin American officers, including the leaders of the major death squads on the continent. The Interamerican Air Forces Academy, still in operation in Panama, trained 90 percent

of the Salvadoran Air Force.

Ever since Jimmy Carter and Omar Torrijos negotiated the return of the canal to Panama (to take place in 1999), a major sector of the U.S. ruling elite has agitated for abrogating the treaty. The Committee of Santa Fe—a right-wing think tank whose document, "A New Inter-American Policy for the Eighties," became a blueprint for the Reagan agenda in Latin America—proposed in 1980, "If the present treaties fail, place the Panama Canal under the protection of the Inter-American Defense Board." In December of 1989, two days before day-to-day operation of the canal was to be turned over to a Panamanian, they got their wish in spades.

The invasion of Panama also responds to other contradictions faced by the U.S. in the last decade of the 20th century. These include the failure of U.S. industries and banks, despite an uninterrupted decade of capitalist gluttony, to mount any serious competition to either West Germany or Japan for the world market. As the consolidation of the European Economic Community in 1992 nears, and with the unexpected opening of Eastern Europe to the global capitalist economy, German capitalist power looms ominously large in U.S. eyes. So too with Japan vis-à-vis Asia. In this situation, it becomes vitally important to maintain U.S. control over Latin American markets and economies.

The assumption of the U.S. ruling class has been that Latin America would always be its special preserve. But this is being challenged by the people of Latin America themselves. The near victory of Luis "Lula" Silva and the Worker's Party in the recent presidential election in Brazil, Latin America's largest and most heavily indebted economy, must have been unnerving. And more urgently, Central America refuses to mold itself to Washington's wishes for stability, as the current FMLN offensive dramatizes.

Panama was first and foremost a message to those who would challenge U.S. hegemony on the continent—the Sandinistas, the FMLN, and all popular movements. It said, loud and clear, "Don't mess with Uncle Sam or Noriega's fate will be yours." After a century and a half of U.S. intervention in Latin America, our answer has to be a resounding rejection of this Yankee arrogance. U.S., get out and stay out! □

**NELSON MANDELA,
FREE AT LAST!
AMANDLA!**

Socialism in Crisis

The

Discreet

Charm

of the

Bourgeoisie

COMMUNIST LEADERS AND PARTIES ARE BEING THROWN IN THE DUSTBIN of history. Statues of Lenin are crashing down. Can socialism survive and, if so, what will it look like and what will it mean to us? Socialism through Red Army fiat is certainly dead. The speed with which the Eastern European CPs have unraveled indicates just how little they understood or represented their own people, and just how much they depended on Soviet power. In the process, fundamental failings of the system of socialism, as constituted in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union since Stalin, have been revealed:

- * Central planning had failed either to generate growth competitive with capitalism or to meet the demands and expectations of consumers. Internal and external debt has slowed growth to a crawl.
- * The "dictatorship of the proletariat" had become the dictatorship of a party elite, using its position to secure privileges and wealth at the expense of the people.
- * Basic democratic freedoms and self-determination of nations were trampled on in the name of state security.

In Eastern Europe, Poland and Hungary are racing to embrace Western investment and capitalism, in the process reducing themselves to the status of developing countries. Responding to International Monetary Fund austerity recommendations (the conditions for \$3.5 billion in new loans), the Solidarity government of Poland has announced plans to cut state subsidies by approximately 50 percent, allow price increases from 25 percent to 50 percent per month and lay off 400,000 workers. How well this capitalist medicine will go down with the workers who brought Solidarity into power is an open question.

Socialist movements in East Germany and Czechoslovakia have a longer history and stronger base among the people. But the stultification of Stalinist regimes, excesses and corruption by party leadership, and decades of repression by state security police and the Soviet military have destroyed most of the credibility Communists ever claimed. Reformers in the ranks are trying to reestablish an organic connection between party and people. But even if these efforts succeed, fashioning an economy incorporating market features with some of the social values we associate with socialism is a daunting task.

The best chance for revitalizing socialism lies within the Soviet Union itself, where *glasnost* and *perestroika* unleashed the current upsurge in popular democracy. Unlike Eastern Europe, where Stalin's tanks imposed his particular brand of socialism, the Soviet Union did undergo a revolution; and the efforts to revitalize socialism are led by a party which, for the moment at least, is basically intact. Working against Gorbachev, though, are major obstacles: an intractable economy and a multi-national empire coming apart at the seams.

Gorbachev's efforts are taking place in a perilous international environment. Western Europe and the U.S. hover like hungry birds of prey, waiting to descend on the carcass of an impoverished and dismembered Soviet Union. "Z" (the anonymous author of a recent article entitled "To The Stalin Mauseleum") probably reflects a significant sector of the Bush administration Cold Warriors when he asserts the inability of socialism to reform itself and advocates continuing a containment strategy against the Soviet Union.

All this, of course, is creating a heyday for anti-communists and consternation among liberal critics of capitalism. But we can't just limit the discussion to a comparison of advanced industrial nations like West Germany or the U.S. on the one hand, and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union on the other.

*Revolutionaries
in El Salvador,
Nicaragua,
Palestine, and
the Philippines
are still fighting
for a new life
for their people.*

Imperialism is a global system. The social cost of the relative prosperity of the West is the impoverishment of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where half the world's population still wonders where its next meal is coming from. U.S., German and Japanese banks and corporations (and economies) benefit from a massive transfer of capital in the form of interest payments on huge debts and unfair terms of trade. If Mexico or Mozambique wants aid, the terms are IMF austerity measures like those faced by Poland. Socialist economics may not work yet, but capitalism sure continues to kill.

Acknowledging the failings of socialism is disconcerting. Fundamental principles—the rationality of central planning, the leading role of the party, democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the belief in moral incentives—are now up for grabs. And the retrenchment of Soviet economic and political priorities threatens support for national liberation struggles. The new rubric of “peaceful resolution of regional conflicts” seems to dictate withdrawal of Soviet support for revolutionary movements and countries—from Nicaragua and Cuba to the ANC—without any reciprocal lessening of U.S. support for repressive dictatorships.

At the same time, if we are honest, we would have to admit that most of us did not look to either the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe for examples of what we thought of as socialism. Although we can't overestimate the importance of support by socialist countries for national liberation movements, we've always had to question the kinds of societies many of the Soviet Bloc nations had at home. And our idealism about China was dashed long ago, by the exposure of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution and Chinese support for counter-revolution in the Third World.

In fact, one strength of anti-imperialists has been the understanding of the role of national liberation struggles in creating a more humane world. Although victorious national liberation movements certainly haven't brought about the end of global capitalism, in the face of a deadly counter-assault and tremendously complex economic and political conditions, revolutionaries in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Palestine, and the Philippines are still trying in different ways to grapple with these realities and fight for a new life for their people. In this context, we need to look closely at the critiques of *perestroika*, *glasnost* and the events in Eastern Europe, coming from Cuba and other socialists in the developing world.

If Gorbachev and other reformers are able to achieve the revitalization they seek, the possibilities are immense. Democracy under capitalism, while an advance in human thought at its historic moment, has always been at the cost of colonialism and human misery. But the possibility of combining the economic ideals of socialism with true democracy is very exciting to imagine. Will this happen, and, if so, will it happen within the next 20 years? Like everyone else in the world, we have to wait and see and hope for the best.

It's easy to become cynical, to look at the world and say “Nothing can ever change.” But it's not as though life in the U.S. is so great either. For while the left debates the future of socialism in Europe, conditions here are deteriorating. We might not know how to rebuild socialism, but we do know that homeless people are on the streets; that racism is rampant; that violence against women is at an all-time high and that gay and lesbian liberation is certainly not around the corner. Our job has to be developing strategies and movements that address these and a myriad of other issues, such as health care, education and the environment, that are on the agenda.

It ought to be an interesting decade!



New Faces of Racism

credit: Andrew Lichtenstein/Impact Visuals

by
Felix
Shafer

ONE BYPRODUCT OF THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION sweeping Eastern Europe—and one devotedly sought by the Bush presidency—is a tendency to ignore crises deep within our own society. Now that the “victory over socialism” has been announced, the slightest admission that there are fundamental problems within U.S. capitalism (other than crime and crack cocaine) is clearly a no-no. Nowhere is this exercise of amnesia and denial more pronounced than in the face of racism.

For some time now, mainstream research and civil rights organizations* have refuted the myth of racial equality with hard proof that progress for the majority of Black people, in all but a few areas, stopped years ago. Neither homelessness, poverty nor death is color blind. After narrowing for decades, the gap in life expectancy between Blacks and whites has grown for the past three years.

Add to this the bloody evidence that an upsurge

in racist violence is upon us. On inner city streets, middle class suburbs and elite college campuses, groups of young white men have shamelessly attacked Black people with a vengeance unseen since the early days of the civil rights movement. Skeptics may argue that this overstates the depth of the problem; high profile incidents, such as those mentioned below, are still relatively small in number. Yet they are growing. In this society, blatant and subtle white supremacy remains a force which Black people don't have the luxury to avoid and progressive whites ignore only at great peril. A “new” wave of racism is now gathering momentum among the young. It's important to beware the beginnings.

Item: Summer in New York City: In the latest in a series of similar assaults, a sixteen-year old Black youth, Yusef Hawkins, was shot dead by a mob of thirty young, white, working class men. **Stated Motive:** The killers thought he might be on his way to the birthday party of a white woman in the Italian, working class, Brooklyn community of Bensonhurst.

* National Research Council, *Blacks and American Society*, 1989 and National Urban League, *The State of Black America*, annual reports since 1987.

Item: White students at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, a campus once known for its radical activism, staged a mock slave auction. This

incident, which shocked the educational community last year, was only one among hundreds of examples of racist harassment and violence on college campuses.



Stated Motive: Black students demand special privileges, are loud and uppity. They deserve to be put in their place.

Item: Portland, Oregon: Screaming, "Let's kill him," neo-nazi skinheads armed with baseball bats, beat Mulugeta Seraw, a twenty-seven-year old Ethiopian man, to death. **Stated Motive:** The U.S. is being destroyed by "mud people" ["Mud people" is a term employed by the fascistic Christian Identity movement for all people not chosen by their God, i.e. Third World people, Jews, lesbians and gays] who receive unfair advantages over working class whites. Despite negative publicity, the ranks of nazi skinheads in the U.S. have swollen from several hundred, a few years ago, to several thousand today. Drawing inspiration from similar groups in Europe (where racist parties are winning seats in government), they have become the unofficial youth wing of established U.S. fascists like the neo-nazi's and the Ku Klux Klan.

The young white men carrying out these attacks are not children of the old segregationist South, born into a society where overt white supremacy was encoded in law, taught in schools and preached from the pulpit. Their school curriculum discusses civil rights; their favorite television shows have been cleansed of blatant racist stereotypes. Despite growing up in a society ostensibly committed to racial harmony, many children of the first post-civil rights generation apparently feel free to act in ways that are more racist than their own parents did when they were young. When interviewed, brought to trial or before college disciplinary proceedings, the first words out of their mouths are

invariably, "I'm not racist; it was just a fight that got out of control. They were asking for it." On campus, the favored defense is usually, "I didn't mean it; it was just a prank."

CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE

To trace the development of a racist personality structure among today's young white adults, we have to look for roots in the previous era. America's hard right turn had a devastating impact on children born just as the fires of the radical 1960s began to cool and finally chill out.

A generation ago, the drive for empowerment took shape in a youth rebellion against the imperialist system. The legitimacy of institutions and value systems responsible for maintaining ideological control was questioned as never before. And with this came a deeper challenge to the internalized webs of capital—oppressive relations between white and colonized Third World people, men and women, straights and gays—which anchor the "national character." Believing it was possible to profoundly change the moral/social order, youthful alienation began to be transformed into radical mobilization against the system.

Along with violent repression of revolutionary Third World organizations, halting the spread of radical consciousness among young people was made a top priority by the state. There is a growing body of documentation about the harassment, con-



spiracy trials, jailing, and outright murders orchestrated by the FBI's COINTELPRO during the 1960s. But the equally important processes through which impe-

rialism reasserted control over social attitudes are still not widely discussed by the left. *Central to this project was retrenching and disguising white supremacy in the era of civil rights.*

From the outset of the Nixon presidency, it became clear that the promise of civil rights and the war on poverty would never be fulfilled. Because such structural reforms were unprofitable to big business, the government began dismantling anti-discrimination laws, education and employment programs for Black people. It would take a decade of Reagan and Bush to uproot what so many people had fought for.

Meanwhile, new international circuits of imperialist competition and profit-making were being organized. In the U.S., blue-collar manufacturing jobs, where many Black people had found employment, shifted to areas of the Third World (like South Asia) where cheap labor was readily available. Growing competition between the U.S., Europe and Japan accelerated this trend.

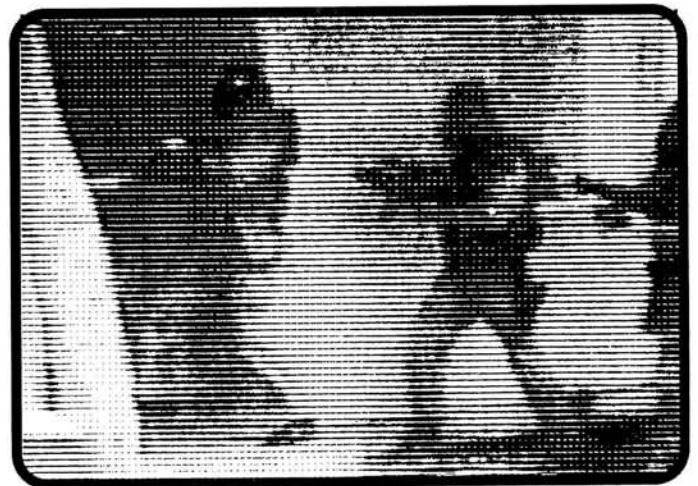
Not surprisingly, Black unemployment began increasing and street crime (as a form of self-employment in the inner city) mounted. The "underclass," a racially-charged category widely used to describe Black people marginalized and forced to seek subsistence via the "underground economy," was in formation. Manipulating real fears of being victimized by crime enabled the ruling elite to deflect attention away from its own responsibility. Moreover, momentum towards a more democratic government based on economic and racial justice was supplanted by right-wing movements who used "controlling crime" as a codeword for controlling Black people. The anti-racist and anti-authoritarian trends embraced by many whites during the 1960s shifted into reverse.

The archetype of the "Black Criminal" served to justify astronomic increases in the rate of imprisonment of Black youth, as compared to whites. With the violent fight against crime becoming a national obsession, liberal and conservative politicians succeeded in making the war on crime our permanent number one domestic issue.

The drama of crime and punishment became the mask behind which the "new" racism would hide. In less than a decade, images of Black people twisted all the way around. Colonized men once seen as victims of segregation and injustice became life-threatening criminals deserving harsh punishment. The degree to which racist assumptions about crime permeate daily life is illustrated by the murder of Carol Stuart, a pregnant white woman, in Boston. When she was killed and her husband Charles wounded late last year in an apparent robbery, no one questioned her husband's story that they were victims of a Black gunman. As the media pressed for an arrest, Boston's Black community was put up against the wall by police. Suspects were rounded up. A month later, Charles Stuart committed suicide after his tale of a Black assailant was exposed as a hoax to cover up his own guilt in the murder of his wife.

These social currents joined with a new set of economic realities for young whites. For the first time, a generation of working class whites was born with opportunities for economic advancement significantly lower than those of their parents. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, many came face to face with the frustrating fact that they would neither own the homes nor have the secure jobs and status that they grew up expecting as their birthright. Reagan's pledge to restore American greatness was a blatant appeal to the insecurities of white working and middle class people. His administration internationalized the fear quotient by adding the "war on terrorism" to "law and order." Now it's the "war on drugs." Whether it is racially-charged symbols of dark-skinned terrorists or Black predators on the streets of your home town, the results are the same: accumulating tensions within the white psyche are being channelled to support the creation of a more authoritarian state.

The degree to which our attitudes about crime and punishment have been successfully manipulated can be seen when we look at the contradictory ways people respond to crimes committed by the rich and poor. Grand scale looting of the public coffers by corporate officials (white-collar crime) is ten times greater than combined larcenies, robberies, burglaries and auto thefts. Despite evidence that corporate executives repeatedly carry out premeditated acts (i.e. toxic waste dumping, unsafe workplaces) which cause injury and death to innocent people, these crimes are never considered violent. Ironically, for all their talk about waging war on crime, the New Right cronies who ran the Reagan administration were targets of more criminal prosecutions than any of their predecessors. The HUD, Wedtech, and Pentagon procurement scandals represent billions in ripped off bucks. In the words of Gerry Spence, author of *With Justice for None: Destroying an American Myth*, "One



Young White Men and the Mob

WHILE ACTS OF RACIAL VIOLENCE are committed by all classes of white youth, it is important to distinguish between the thoughts and actions of young men and women. It's hardly new to point out that political power and violence have, throughout U.S. history, been monopolized by white men. From cowboys and cavalry massacring Native Americans, to nightriders in the plantation South; from inner city mobs, to today's campus fraternity jocks, it's always been men who carry out the great majority of unofficial racist attacks. Whether it's motivated by patriotism, vigilante justice or defending the patriarchal family, the intertwining of white and male supremacy has provided the system again and again with a mass of white men prepared to use violence against perceived threats to their privileged place in society.

Many young white women undoubtedly do share similar racial attitudes, but when it comes to the issue of actual assault the component of male violence is striking. Combined, as it was in Bensonhurst, racial and sexual hatred explodes into a modern-day lynching. Weeks after the murder, interviewers who visited the community found racial and sexual rationales for the crime which could have been uttered a century ago.

The young white woman, Gina F., who invited her Black and Latino friends to her birthday party was called a "whore who dared to endanger the neighborhood." When asked how inviting friends could endanger the neighborhood, people responded by talking about Blacks as criminals, dwellers of crack-infested slums. Rumors were spread by young and old alike that she was pregnant or had already had a Black child. At first the white men in the area said she acted stuck up and too good for them; later they called her a slut.

Bent on declaring that their neighborhood wasn't racist, most residents showed little sign of remorse at the murder until prompted. More than a hundred years after the end of slavery, the vigilante men that killed Yusef Hawkins were acting out the same social psychosis that led southern whites to hang hundreds of Black men for the "crime" of speaking to white women.

way the Crips and Bloods [Black Los Angeles gangs] can improve their image is to do what the big crooks do, buy advertising on TV news shows so that their crimes will rarely be reported."

"JUST ENTERTAINMENT"

Without the radical alternatives of the previous decade, television achieved a new degree of hegemonic power in shaping the consciousness of the young to fit the "new" conservative era. Consider the following: People who are 20 years old today developed cradle-to-grave television viewing habits between 1977 and 1980. In 1979 (just before Reagan took office), 70% of all programs contained violence—5.7 episodes per hour, up from 4.5 in 1978. In weekend daytime (children's) programs, 92% of all shows contained some violence. The rate of violent episodes was 17 per hour and nearly 75% of all leading characters were involved in violence.*

Despite all the criticism of violence on children's shows, millions of kids still wake up on Saturday morning to watch "GI Joe" and "Marvel Action Universe" where they are taught that violence is a noble way of life. Faithfully mirroring the Reagan/Bush universe, television paints a moving picture of heroic males (almost always white) regularly and successfully using lethal violence as a way of avenging wrongs and deterring crime.

The male supremacist component of this propaganda must also be noted. Whether it's cartoons or adult programming, women are typically portrayed as victims to be rescued by strong, armed men. On evening shows, after the criminal is subdued or dead, a romantic interlude usually follows. And in a perverse twist, the more "independent" a woman's role on TV may be, the greater is her need/anxiety about being "sexy." A federally-funded study, issued in November 1989, reported that boys' moods are elevated by rock music videos and video games, while girls' are depressed. Expressing concern about the sexist orientation of the new media, one of the report's authors said, "Much of what's in music videos and video games is clearly directed to boy's interests (sic)...Girls often are blatant sex objects."

Anyone who has ever tried to get the attention of children, while they're watching their favorite TV show, knows the hypnotic power of the boob tube. As electronic and video technology expands and becomes affordable, a new generation of interactive games has found an immense market. These games induce trance-like states of consciousness called "flow states" in which players experience a heightened sense of life combined with focused concentra-

* Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, "The Mainstreaming of America: Violence Profile No. 11.," *Journal of Communications*, Summer 1980.

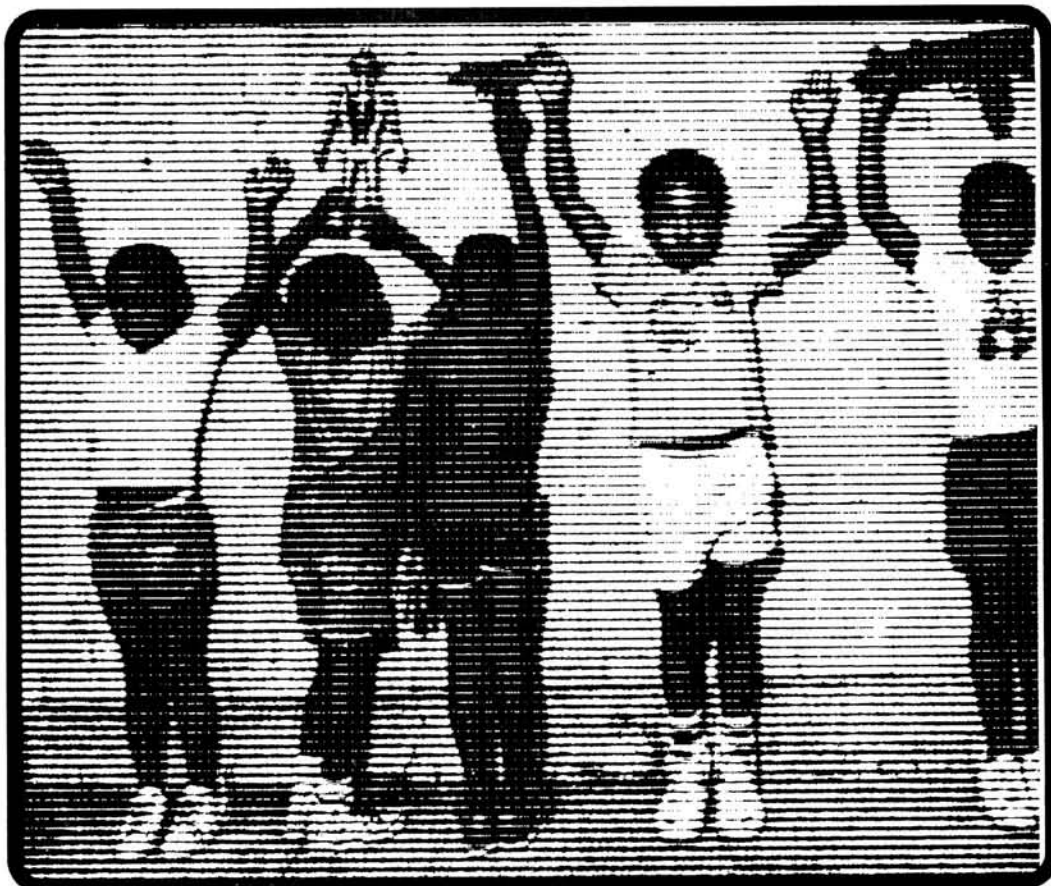
tion. Nintendo, with a base sticker price of \$100, has become the centerpiece of Christmas for millions of kids. Its U.S. sales were projected at \$2.8 billion in 1989. According to the company, one in three Nintendo players is eighteen years or older.

Recent studies into the effects of video games offer startling conclusions about their role as instruments of what can only be called brainwashing. John Murray, chairman of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies at Kansas State University, was research coordinator of a National Institute of Mental Health study of TV violence begun twenty years ago. In his words, the games are "a quantum leap in the technology of violence... If you wanted to increase aggression, the best way is to show a child what to do. Interactive video has done exactly that. It's the ideal teaching environment." Another authority at Yale University's Family Television Research Center is more blunt, "Video can impoverish a child's imagination, and impair the development of conscience. You lose a sense of the meaning of hurting."

Last Christmas, Nintendo was pushing the next step in interactive video, the Power Glove. The device straps on (like a bionic arm) allowing the player to physically throw punches and shoot opponents displayed on the TV screen. With this, the mind and body are drawn closer towards seeking pleasure in a total fantasy environment. The development of this sort of technology is part and parcel of perfecting the mass mind control so necessary to socializing the model citizens of late 20th century America. Who says all this is "Just Entertainment?"

While it's hardly astounding to observe the role of television in mainstreaming a culture of violence, very little attention is paid to the way its themes contribute to the upsurge in racism. Cop shows, tabloid TV, and the more recent phenomenon of crime programs drawn from real life, like "America's Most Wanted," "COPS," etc., all carry the message that the only effective action against crime involves violence. These shows are crude but effective in propelling forward the "us versus them" dynamics of scapegoating. Given the stigmatization of Black people (especially youth) as potential criminals, it's a small leap to the conclusion that the face of the enemy is usually black.

Over the past twenty years, there have been so many cop and vigilante movies that many young white men's empowerment fantasies are based on a whole lot of Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone.



Playing updated versions of the traditional American vigilante, they are some of our era's biggest stars. All personify the official or unofficial avenging angel. Rugged individualism predominates. Male sexuality is linked to violence. Clearly archetypes like this motivated Bernard Goetz, the vigilante hero who shot four Black youths on the New York subways because he felt threatened. Goetz showed that even a "nerd" could be a vigilante. He bridged the gap between Rambo and the average white guy by showing that all you need is a gun and some guts to be a hero.

"MORE THAN BLACK"

Simultaneous with making Black people targets of the war on crime, a mythology of Black success based on assimilation was popularized. Black politicians and celebrities were showcased to demonstrate that we had progressed beyond racism into an era where anyone could make it. According to an unusually analytical piece in the *New York Times* of November 12, 1989 entitled, "TV's Black World

see RACISM, p. 17



Fighting AIDS Is More Than A Fashion Statement

by Arawn Eibhlyn
drawings by Terry Forman

This article is dedicated to Terry Sutton—my friend, confidante, and inspiration for much of what is included here, though he wouldn't agree with everything I've said—he never did! Terry died on April 11, 1989, murdered by government red tape and corporate greed.

You can bury your feelings,
you can bury your head,
with a handful of dirt
you can bury the dead.
You can lower your eyes,
and with hands over ears
you can deafen the cries...
You can bury the truth
'cause you've done your share,
But it's just not enough
to merely show that you care.
Not a soul will get any rest
till we've done more than our best...
"ACT UP"
for Terry Sutton
— words and music by Jo Carol

ON OCTOBER 11, 1988, I WAS ONE OF 1,500 MEN AND WOMEN from around the country who shut down the routine functioning of the Food and Drug Administration headquarters in Rockville, Maryland. It was the most audacious action to date of a movement that was only one year old. News coverage of people with HIV infection willing to fight in order to live in the face of the AIDS pandemic reached around the world. That day we chanted, "42,000 dead from AIDS! Where was George?" Patrick Grace. Dan Snow. David Bell. Don Wright. Terry Sutton. These men were my friends. All were arrested that day in Rockville. All are now dead.

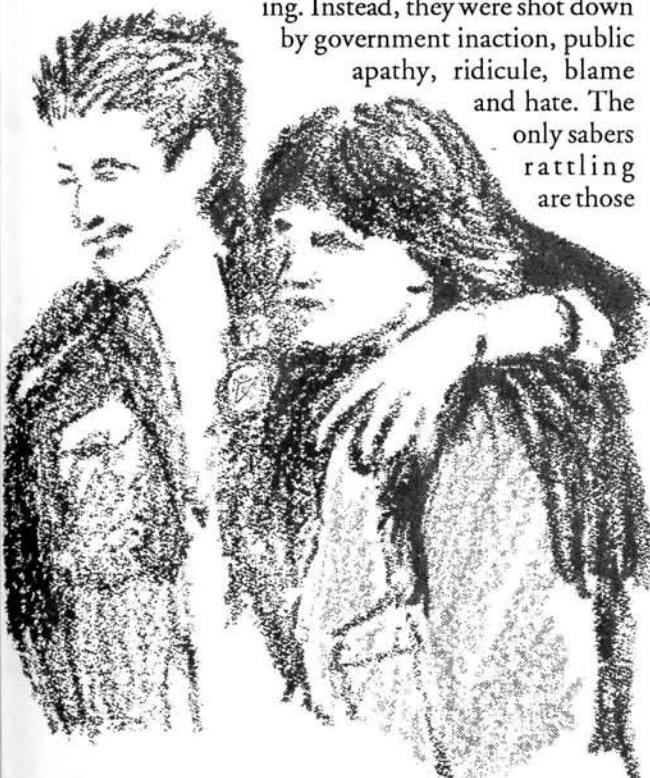
I've been to a lot of demonstrations since then. In January, 1989, about 100 AIDS activists tied up morning rush hour traffic on the Golden Gate Bridge for nearly an hour to drive home the point that AIDS should be everyone's concern. In June, 300 of us took over the opening ceremonies of the V International Conference on AIDS in Montreal, demanding that the scientific community recognize the importance of the role people with HIV infection are playing in combating AIDS. In October, 1989, thousands demonstrated in 20 cities across the U.S. to demand a federally coordinated emergency

program to end the epidemic, and to protest the Bush administration's assertion that it's "pound foolish" to put money into AIDS treatment access. A year later, the number of lives taken by AIDS in the U.S. alone stood at more than 65,000—23,000 lives in twelve months.

If they had been shot down in a military skirmish over unknown territory, Reagan or Bush would have spoken eloquent words over flag-draped coffins, flags would have flown at half mast, and the cry for retaliation would have been deafening. Instead, they were shot down

by government inaction, public apathy, ridicule, blame

and hate. The only sabers rattling are those



of right-wing bigots such as Jesse Helms and William Dannemeyer. And the growing AIDS activist movement has developed more quickly than anyone could have predicted even two years ago.

We have no choice. If we don't fight, more people will die.

NO TURNING BACK

In the face of death, we have become more proud—strengthened in our resolve. There is nothing we cannot overcome.

— the Truth Fairy (from a flyer circulated in San Francisco's Castro District)

Is the lesbian and gay community too focused on AIDS? Have we become, as some say, so fixated on "the drama of catastrophe" that we're

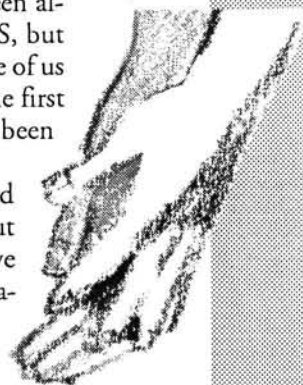
abandoning the struggle for lesbian and gay liberation? There's a lot of discussion these days about such questions.

Faced with a government policy that can only be described as negligent at best, and genocidal at worst, we've been forced to invest incredible amounts of time and money just to survive. Have we, in the process, ignored the importance of ending anti-lesbian/gay violence? Or the needs of gay youth driven onto the streets by families, friends—a society—they can't fit into? Where are the energy and resources in a male-dominated community to fight lesbian oppression? To continue the battle for basic civil and human rights? These are important questions and they have to be addressed.

It's true our movement has focused on AIDS. But those who condemn people with HIV infection, their caregivers and AIDS activists for failing to address the breadth of lesbian and gay issues are looking at the world through the wrong end of a telescope. On the contrary, these very people, through our battle to end the AIDS epidemic, are playing a critical role in revitalizing the movement for lesbian and gay liberation. To say the AIDS movement is holding back our struggle is to lose sight of the victories we've won, the growth we're undergoing.

The struggle to defeat AIDS is undeniably about our liberation. We experience AIDS as both a great personal loss and as an attack on our community's right to exist. Thousands of gay men have been allowed to die—not just because we have AIDS, but because we're expendable in this society. None of us doubts that if straight white men had been the first to contract AIDS, much more would have been done to end the epidemic.

It may be that AIDS will eventually be cured or at least controlled by medical science. But AIDS is not a purely medical issue. If it were, we wouldn't face mandatory testing, discrimination based on antibody status, or soaring anti-gay violence. We wouldn't have to blockade federal buildings, zap government officials, or smuggle treatments across the border. We were hated for being queer before AIDS ever entered



* See Darryl Yates Rist, "AIDS As Apocalypse: The Deadly Costs of an Obsession," *The Nation*, February 13, 1989.

the picture. AIDS has only intensified the hatred, and heightened our understanding of where we stand.

The right wing—all the way from the pulpit to the White House—hoped that AIDS would sound the death knell for lesbian and gay liberation. Defeating the advancing “gay menace” has always been important to reclaiming America from perceived decadence and decay and returning it to traditional Christian values. AIDS handed the right wing a new round of ammunition. Dubbed “GRID” (Gay Related Immune Deficiency) by the scientific community in the early days of the epidemic, AIDS was quickly popularized as the “Gay Plague,” and a moral panic set in that blamed all gay people for its spread.

Let’s face it—a lot of people rejoiced at the thought of queers dropping like flies. And the old axiom to “make hay while the sun shines” certainly applied to the vermin that crawled onto the political platform to rail against the “...filth, disease and degradation which is to be found in the ‘gay lifestyle’ of the typical AIDS victim.”*

Homo-hating found new justification and the number of anti-gay attacks began to soar. According to the Violence Project of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, the percentage of anti-gay attacks motivated by fear of AIDS rose nationally from eight percent in 1985 to 17 percent in 1988. Other groups, such as the New York City Gay and Lesbian Anti-Violence Project, cite statistics closer to 30 percent.

In another measure of the impact of AIDS on popular attitudes towards gay people, support within the general public for even the most basic civil rights dropped dramatically between 1982 and 1987, when fear of contracting AIDS hit its highest point. Between 1977 and 1982, public support for gay civil rights rose modestly. In 1982, approximately 45 percent of those surveyed said homosexual relations between consenting adults should be legal. By 1987, that figure had dropped to 33 percent. John Adams Wettergreen summed it up succinctly: “The problem of AIDS can be solved instantly and efficiently by restricting homosexuality, not by granting it rights.”

But more significantly, our hard-won right as lesbians and gay men to define our own lives threatened, once again, to slip away from us. This assertion of our right to define ourselves, after all, was responsible for the many positive changes our movement fought for. It is at the very heart of what it means to be liberated.

In the days before Stonewall, lesbians and gay men had virtually no power to define what our lives were like. The world saw us—and we saw ourselves—through the grotesque images created by the church, the criminal justice system and the medical profession. To the righteous, we were immoral, an abomination in the eyes of god. They drove us from the churches. To the lawmakers and enforcers, we were criminals. They locked us up after brutal raids on our clubs and other meeting places, and published our names in local papers for all to know our “crime.” And to those with the power to judge sanity, we were sick. They incarcerated us in mental asylums, or “cured” us with aversion therapy and electric shock.

Nothing was the same after the Stonewall riot. It was the spark that ignited decades of pent-up rage and frustration. It awakened us to the possibility that we could fight back. And in the process of building a movement, we talked about our lives, developed an understanding of our oppression, and took action to seize control of our own destiny, with the goal



* John Adams Wettergreen, “AIDS, Public Morality and Public Health,” *Claremont Review of Books*, Fall 1985.

of transforming not only ourselves, but all of society. It was a time of great energy, of seemingly unlimited possibilities.

The activism of the post-Stonewall movement mobilized more lesbians and gay men than ever before in history. The cry to "Come Out" became an act of personal and political liberation. Lesbians and gay men proclaimed "Gay is Good," challenging society as well as the self-hatred we had internalized growing up in a virulently anti-gay society.

When I came out in 1972 at the age of 21, it was a liberating experience. It followed too many years of denial, depression and self-hate. I came out in those heady days of gay liberation. The women's movement was at its height. Black Power was challenging the racist foundations of U.S. policy in this country and around the world. And the war in Vietnam had not yet ended. I had my ear pierced (the right one, of course), wore my hair long, and wore finger nail polish and eye shadow to my bookstore job in the local mall. And, mind you, this was not New York or San Francisco—it was Lexington, Kentucky.

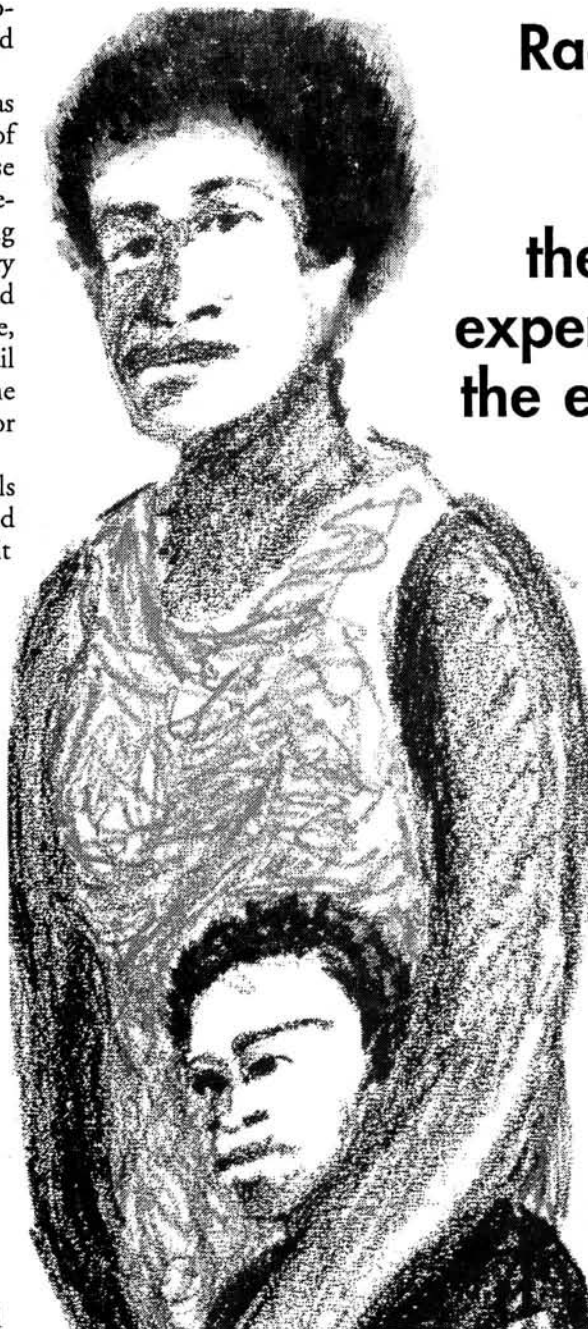
I didn't want to be like any of the male role models in my life. I wanted to be quite different, in fact. And I guess I was. Androgyny was fashionable, and it shaped my consciousness—my experience. My makeup was a weapon to wage war on straight society; and from the looks on most of the faces in the bookstore, I'd say it definitely had an impact. If people didn't like it, well, I didn't care—that was their problem. Like thousands of other gay men, I rejected the roles society defined for us. Androgyny was a political statement—the outward expression of our commitment to ending sex and gender roles as cornerstones of our oppression. We defined who we were. And we saw our own liberation as part of the larger struggles for change sweeping the U.S. My favorite political button from that period (and I still wear it every Lesbian/Gay Pride Day) is bright pink and says "Freaking Fag Revolutionary." Fitting in was definitely not on our minds.

As we moved into the late 70s, the lesbian and gay movement built institutions to defend our communities against violence, to push for civil rights protections and to strike down repressive laws. The Castro and Greenwich Village were booming gay enclaves with thriving businesses and an openness we'd only dreamed of. We had newfound confidence and a sense of our own power to affect change. If we were not yet accepted, we were at least creating more space to find out who we were. We were attempting to create an identity for lesbians and gay men that fit us better. One based on our own experience, our own needs and desires.

But during that same period, lesbian/gay politics shifted from a struggle for liberation to the pursuit of

civil rights. We didn't talk too much anymore about taking pride in being defiantly different and demanding that society accept us as we were—drag queens, bull dykes and all. More and more, we argued that we weren't really all that different after all. That we were just like everyone else—we held jobs,

Racism has shaped much of the world's experience of the epidemic.



we had children, we voted. Women wore dresses and men wore suits. Our tactics changed to accomplish these new goals. While we never abandoned the streets completely, visible gay leaders were more likely to be seen testifying before government hearings or lobbying on Capitol Hill. And we made many important gains during that time.

But AIDS has made us re-examine just how far



lives, we've refused to go back. We've fought to define our sexuality as a positive aspect of our lives—to affirm our right to be intimate, loving people. We've taken care of each other. We've developed stronger, more supportive relationships.

These changes may seem insignificant at first glance, but they are strengthening us. We've learned to survive. In some deeper sense, our self-image is changing—we're not weak. It's just as the Truth Fairy said: If we can survive AIDS, we can survive anything.

ACT UP, FIGHT BACK, FIGHT AIDS!

ACT UP...join the fight
Do something strong
to show them what's right
ACT UP...give 'em a fight
and thru the darkness
we'll be the light
—“ACT UP”

Strengthening our sense of community, of our right to exist, has been an important weapon in our battle against AIDS. Resistance—confrontation with an uncaring and unresponsive government—is another. On October 11, 1987, one year before the FDA action, 750,000 lesbians and gay men marched in Washington, D.C. Two days later, nearly 5,000 of us went to the Supreme Court for the largest act of civil disobedience in the history of the lesbian and gay struggle. Eight hundred and forty were arrested protesting the Court's upholding of a Georgia anti-sodomy law that effectively maintains our illegal status.

The Supreme Court action was our answer to those who hoped we'd all die off or at least be pushed back into the closet. In the face of mounting anti-gay hysteria and overwhelming sorrow, we celebrated our existence and screamed a defiant “For Love and For Life, We're Not Going Back.” That October was a turning point and we all felt it—it forecast a new militancy and determination for our movement.

For someone who came out just after the Stonewall rebellion, the vitality of today's AIDS movement holds the promise of reclaiming the radical impulse of those earlier days. This isn't about an aging queen taking a trip down memory lane—it's about developing, once again, the radical critique of society necessary to transform gay oppression into gay liberation. The AIDS movement is a training ground for a new generation of lesbian and gay activists. They are infusing the movement with new energy and new experience. As those of us who par-

we've come. By turning toward a more legalistic focus, have we merely exchanged the stodgy gray-suited straight politician for one with a better fashion sense? Have we handed over control of our lives to a select few gay politicians willing to play by the rules of a political system that generally despises us?

As we look around at society's response to AIDS, we see the same tired trinity we've been fighting all along. Only now they have death and contagion on their side. Their reaction to the AIDS epidemic has rested on a fundamental hatred of our lives. How else are we to understand the callous disregard for the tens of thousands of gay men who've died? Aren't the appeals for abstinence based on the belief that our sexuality is “unnatural”? That, really, we shouldn't be sexual under any circumstances? Even more insulting, our detractors have tried to get us to go along with their condemnation of our lives.

But, in the face of these renewed attacks on our

ticipated in the early movement bring our understandings and experiences from the days of GLF (Gay Liberation Front) and GAA (Gay Activists Alliance), we are being challenged to step out of the 60s and 70s to understand that lesbian and gay lives today are different from the Stonewall era in which we came out. This union is strengthening us all. Many questions which had been put on the back burner throughout the 70s are now being discussed again. We are looking at our history, evaluating our successes and failures, plotting a new course.

People with AIDS (PWAs) are playing an instrumental role in this process. Faced with a society that views us as guilty victims just waiting to die, PWAs have fought with doctors, right-wing bigots and government officials. We've taken control of our own lives. We've smuggled drugs into the country; we've set up our own drug trials; we've developed networks for support and information sharing; we've gone to jail. People with AIDS are a source of great inspiration to the larger lesbian and gay community, an example of how not to be a victim, but instead to fight and win.

The shift to activism is an important step for us. As we've watched the death toll spiral upward, it has become clear that we must take matters into our own hands. While we continue to press the government for a responsible and humane AIDS policy, we have few illusions that this will happen without a strong movement in the streets which makes the price of neglect higher than the price of change. To succeed, we need to mobilize as many lesbians and gay men into action as possible.

WE'RE HERE! WE'RE QUEER!

While AIDS activism is renewing the need lesbians and gay men feel to fight for our liberation, we've been uncomfortable linking the two issues. In October 1987, ACT NOW (the national AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize and Win) adopted the AIDS Action Pledge as its unifying document without even mentioning lesbians and gay men. This distancing has been partly a rejection of the scapegoating of all lesbians and gay men for the spread of AIDS. After all, we still feel the sting of the earliest AIDS joke to enter American folklore: "Do you know what Gay means? Got AIDS Yet?" Our reluctance has also been based on the recognition that AIDS has had a devastating impact among people of color, injection drug users (IDUs) and, increasingly, adolescents—gay and straight alike. While much of this latter response has been guided by a desire for inclusiveness in our work, there has also been an element of trying to shift blame.

However, the fact remains that the AIDS activist movement is overwhelmingly a movement of lesbians and gay men. Instead of seeing this as a limita-

tion, we should take it as an opportunity to raise our own issues within the context of fighting an epidemic that affects many different communities.

We can and should continue to focus our energies on fighting AIDS. But if we develop a politics of AIDS that places it firmly in the context of our continued oppression as lesbians and gay men, we will succeed in building a stronger movement that speaks more fully to the needs of our diverse community: providing much-needed support services to gay youth; continuing our demands for gay rights; combatting queer bashing; and addressing the problems of racism and sexism, to name a few.

LESBIANS IN THE AIDS MOVEMENT

Historically, the lesbian and gay men's communities have been divided by serious differences—in fact, it's been a long time since there was anything that looked even vaguely like a united lesbian and gay movement. The AIDS epidemic has opened up a new dialogue between lesbians and gay men. We're working together for the first time in many years. Yet lesbians who have contributed so much in the fight against AIDS are viewed with suspicion by men who dominate the movement. Women have had to fight tooth and nail to be seen as anything more than junior partners. Men "tolerate" women in the movement (who are mostly lesbians) so long as they limit their involvement to "women's issues" and accept that it's the men who know best because, after all, we're the ones dying.

Yet, ironically, it was the feminist critique of health care, developed by the women's and lesbian movements in the early 70s, which laid the very foundation for our own response to AIDS. And lesbians have been there since the beginning. Our failure to acknowledge this debt is a reflection of the sexism within the AIDS movement, and our work suffers because of it.

As lesbian AIDS activists have stated many times, they participate in the AIDS movement not only out of solidarity with gay men, but because they understand that the anti-gay response to AIDS has a profound effect on their lives as lesbians. But lesbians have their own issues as well. Many of them—an adversary relationship to the health care system, the threat of violence—are similar to issues faced by gay men. But lesbians' experience of these issues is fundamentally altered by the fact that, as women, their position in society is, most often, one of domination by men. All too often, this includes gay men. Gay men need to work at understanding the power relationships between men and women, and how they play out both in terms of the interpersonal dynamics within the AIDS movement and the issues we choose to raise in our work.

For example, there has been a struggle in the

AIDS activist movement over whether or not to support women's fight for abortion rights. Some men argue that we should stick only to issues directly related to AIDS. But, again, this ignores the social/political aspect of the epidemic. It's no coincidence that many of the same groups most actively opposing the AIDS movement, such as the Traditional Values Coalition, also oppose women's reproductive rights. A society that continues to assert its right to control the lives and bodies of women is not a society that will ever value lesbian and gay lives, AIDS or no AIDS.

Lesbian and gay liberation at its best has understood that such institutions as the heterosexual nuclear family and the church, not often noted as safe havens for queers, are very firmly rooted in the oppression of women. Examining the relationship between male supremacy and compulsory heterosexuality, expanding the list of issues that we consider "ours," will help us to build a broader and more effective movement, one that can pose a deeper challenge to anti-gay social structures than we are capable of posing today.

THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC

The AIDS activist movement in the U.S. has never successfully addressed the international impact of AIDS. We've argued that AIDS is not a "gay disease" primarily as a defense against the equation "Gay=Disease=Death"—not to help develop a truly global response. We have little understanding of the impact of AIDS outside the white gay male community—whether among women, in Third World communities in the U.S., in Africa, in Asia, or in Latin America. This has given our work a narrow focus. In some cases, it has taken on racist overtones. At the V International Conference on AIDS in Montreal in June 1989, some AIDS activists booed and hissed when Dame Nita Barrow, Barbados' delegate to the United Nations, characterized AIDS as 100 percent fatal in her country. AIDS activists have made important struggles to view people with AIDS as productive people *living* with the disease—not as dying "victims." Yet for many throughout the world, AIDS is indeed 100 percent fatal. The response of some activists to Barrow's comments points to the need to deepen our understanding of the differing impact of AIDS where it intersects with the realities of race, sex and class.

According to the World Health Organization, internationally AIDS has taken the lives of 300,000 men, women and children. When we look at AIDS from this perspective, it has been people of color (whether in Uganda or the South Bronx, Mexico or East L.A., Manila or Manilatown) who have been hardest hit. In the U.S., this reality has been obscured by the early focus on the spread of AIDS

among white gay men.

While anti-gayness has shaped our understanding of AIDS, it is racism that has shaped much of the world's experience of the epidemic. At a national meeting of AIDS activists last year, one gay man argued that a discussion of racism and sexism denied the reality that AIDS crossed all boundaries between these communities and, therefore, made the discussion obsolete. While we may be faced with one "disease," we are experiencing several different epidemics. The impact of the epidemic on different communities and in different countries is not monolithic.

Medical science, concentrated in Western industrialized nations, has largely ignored people with AIDS throughout the Third World—except as research subjects who can be exploited with fewer "ethical" restrictions than those placed on research at home. Pharmaceutical companies, looking more to their profit margin than to saving human lives, focus on developing high-tech drugs that will reap mega-bucks. For those of us who can pay \$3,000 to \$6,000 per year for AZT, even our deaths can be profitable. But Burroughs Wellcome has said that AZT will never be made available in Africa, because those who need it cannot pay the price. In light of the devastating impact AIDS is having throughout Africa and in Third World communities in the U.S., such a callous disregard for human life is genocidal—an understanding we've embraced when we talk about AIDS in our own community, but haven't projected beyond.

The AIDS activist movement in the U.S. is just beginning to address these issues. Our understandings of the epidemic and the tasks we need to undertake have been challenged by people of color working within the movement and by groups based in Third World communities. The challenge ahead will be to fully integrate the global reality of AIDS into our day-to-day work. It won't be enough to hold an occasional forum. We need to develop all of our work in ways that educate our community on every aspect of the epidemic. Developing a truly international focus for our work will in no way deny our own experience—on the contrary, it can help us better understand the complex social and political context in which AIDS has been allowed to rampage.

At some point in the next decade, we likely will face a situation in which life-saving treatments—perhaps even a cure for AIDS—are available in the United States and Europe to a large number of white gay men. The impact of AIDS on our community will begin to diminish. But the epidemic will still rage in Africa, the Caribbean, the Philippines, and among people of color in the U.S. There, the general lack of health care for an impoverished population will play itself out as a continuing lack of access to

newly-available treatments. The perspectives on which we build our movement now will determine how we will respond to these future developments. When we succeed in placing our own struggle for survival in the context of people around the world who are also struggling to survive, then we will have truly transformed AIDS into a struggle for life—our own and others. This can only strengthen us.

THE CHALLENGE

The most difficult challenge facing the activist is to respond fully to the needs of the moment and to do so in such a way that the light one attempts to shine on the present will simultaneously illuminate the future.

— Angela Y. Davis
Women, Culture and Politics

As we look back, we can feel good about what we've accomplished. The AIDS activist movement has grown a lot in the two and a half years since we first took to the streets. In that short time, we've built

a truly mass movement that has mobilized thousands of gay men and lesbians. With more than a little creativity, determination and militance we've gone up against government, medical science and pharmaceutical giants. We're taken seriously and we've won important victories that will save lives and change the face of health care in this country.

As a person living with AIDS, I've experienced the fear, the anger and the depression of fighting a life-threatening illness. I've also experienced the strength which the AIDS activist movement gives me to fight, even when I don't feel quite up to it. But there's a lot yet to be done before the history of the AIDS epidemic can be written. How that history turns out will depend in large part on the choices we make today. □

Arawn Eibhlyn is a person living with AIDS. He is national coordinator of ACT-NOW, the AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize and Win, and a member of Prairie Fire Organizing Committee and ACT-UP San Francisco.

RACISM, from p. 9

Turns—But Stays Unreal” by Henry Gates, Jr., “There is very little connection between the social status of Black Americans and fabricated images of Black people that Americans consume each day. Moreover, the representations of Blacks on TV is a very poor index to our social advancement or political progress.” Gates goes on to detail the transformations of the Black image from the days of “Amos ’n Andy” in the 1950s to “Cosby” in the 1980s.

The ascent of “The Cosby Show,” as the most popular program in years, epitomizes the post-civil rights image of Black people. On the one hand, “Cosby” is a dignified departure from garish situation comedies (like “The Jeffersons” or “Webster”) which portray Black people as either clowns or the adopted children of benevolent white parents. On the other, “Cosby” perpetuates the hoax of equal opportunity—that all Black people need to do is work hard in order to achieve a stable middle class existence for themselves and their children. When these programs do take on racism, the battlefield is far removed in time and/or place. It's safe to talk about Martin Luther King at Selma or the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. How can it matter to the white population that Black people are still suffering, if the victims of racism have no worth in their eyes?

These portrayals fly in the face of the reality that only a small percentage of Black families have entered the middle class. According to Gates, “The social vision of ‘Cosby’ throws the blame for black poverty back onto the impoverished.” Part of the

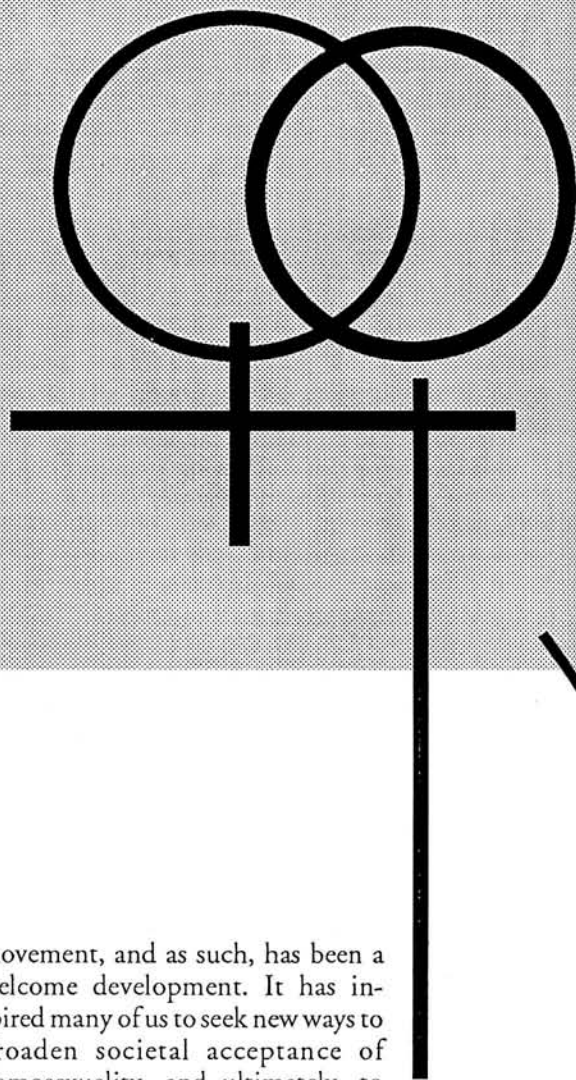
basis of the popularity of “The Cosby Show” and “A Different World” is “that the black characters in them have finally become, in most respects, just like white people.” One of the more ironic aspects of shows which portray “liberated” fantasies of Black success is that they may actually be fueling resentment among working class whites rather than abating it.

These images project and objectify a dualistic vision of Black people—bad, dangerous Black street criminals versus a safe Black middle class (just like whites). The character of Pino, in Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing*, captures the schizophrenic impact of this dualism on Italian, working class youth in Brooklyn. The son of the white owner of a pizza parlor, he deeply resents a career pushing pizza in a neighborhood which is almost all Black. Like so many in this first post-civil rights generation, he detests and feels victimized by Black people, while at the same time maintaining that he isn't racist. Pino is always at the edge of a violent outburst. During an angry confrontation with Mookie, the Black deliveryman played by Spike Lee, Mookie asks him how he can hate Black people so much when he loves celebrities like Prince, Eddie Murphy and Michael Jordan. Taken aback by the question, Pino sputters before finally answering, “But they're not really Black, they're more than Black.”

Black or “more than Black”—either way these images feed racism in white youth and damage the ability of the colonized Black Nation in America to achieve its freedom.

(“New Faces of Racism” will be continued in the next issue of *Breakthrough*.) □

MORE DYKE TACTICS FOR Difficult TIMES



by Sally THOMAS

“WE ARE EVERYWHERE,” IS THE slogan, and it certainly applies to lesbians in just about any progressive social movement today. Scratch the surface, and dykes abound, whether we’re dedicated to routing the U.S. out of Central America, defending abortion rights, or fighting to end the AIDS epidemic. Mapping out the boundaries of “lesbian issues” has always been a challenge, given the complex and overlapping nature of our oppressions—as women, lesbians, and gays. Lesbians usually end up in a difficult position of prioritizing the root of our oppression. One choice is to focus our energy within the women’s movement, and risk lesbian invisibility. Or we can ally ourselves with gay men, knowing that we face at least one major battle against our gay brothers’ inherited male supremacy. Today, this dilemma of identifying a lesbian priority is particularly relevant within both the AIDS and reproductive rights movements.

For many lesbians, the AIDS movement represents the emergence of a unified gay and lesbian

movement, and as such, has been a welcome development. It has inspired many of us to seek new ways to broaden societal acceptance of homosexuality, and ultimately, to organize for gay and lesbian liberation. Yet the extent of our invisibility in the movements we’ve helped to lead, and the realization that lesbian liberation cannot be our primary focus in either the AIDS or pro-choice movements, has prompted many of us to wonder how lesbians can establish more control over the shape of things to come. What is the present state of lesbian affairs, and where do we go from here?

OUR FEMINIST ROOTS

First, let’s look at where we’ve come from, and where we find ourselves as we enter “the gay 90s.” While the death of feminism is proclaimed by the mass media, it’s sometimes easy to forget that twenty years ago, feminism played a central role in pushing the lesbian and gay movement out of the closet and into the streets. Feminism exploded the notion of privacy with its promotion of “the personal is political.” With the advent of feminism, lesbians and gay men moved from a defensive to an offensive stance, challenging public attitudes on deviant sexuality, the origins of sex roles, and the nuclear family as the accepted pillar of society.

Author’s note: “Dyketactics for Difficult Times” by Sarah Franklin and Jackie Stacey appeared in *Feminist Review*, May 1988, and was republished in *Out the Other Side: Contemporary Lesbian Writing*, Crossing Press, 1989. With a title conveying the spirit of challenges awaiting lesbians in the 90s, their article is worth reading.



Though nobody will ever agree on a common definition of feminism, its impact is nonetheless undeniable. Feminism brought thousands of ordinary women to discover, often for the first time, a woman-defined sexuality. Feminism gave women self-respect, and an opportunity to establish whole new ways of being, including the courage to love each other, not just secretly, but with pride. Feminism enabled us to speak out against male violence perpetrated within the confines of the nuclear family. We found strength in ourselves, and in sisterhood.

Feminism opened possibilities for women to shape our lives and identities apart from men, and as such, has been a significant element in the forging of lesbian liberation. At its best, it challenges the structural foundation of society, the relationships between men and women, and the role of the nuclear family in women's oppression and compulsory heterosexuality. That doesn't mean we haven't had to fight against anti-lesbian purges in the women's movement, or blatant homophobia among our straight sisters. Nevertheless, as one of the broadest

reaching social movements of the 20th century, feminism vastly expanded the framework of popular perceptions about women, and created a profound opening for public acceptance of lesbian lifestyles.

LESBIAN OR "GESBIAN"?

Yet for many young women and lesbians today, feminism is an outdated and unpopular concept. Even *Time* magazine is pondering, "Is there a future for feminism?" (12/4/89) *Time's* assessment: "Hairy legs haunt the feminist movement, as do images of being strident and lesbian."

Not surprisingly, the lesbian perspective of feminism (broadly speaking) runs slightly different, though still often critical. On the one hand, "feminism" conjures up the middle-class "have it all and rise to the top" (picture Melanie Griffith in "Working Girl") syndrome. While many of the mainstream feminist leaders still speak eloquently on behalf of women, the pursuit for equal rights has lost its radical appeal. We can probably assume that some of the attempts to broaden acceptance of feminism by

softening the slogans, such as working for "women's right to choose," as opposed to "free abortion on demand," are consciously chosen at a time when feminist consciousness is low (especially among the younger generations), and when the stakes for main-

in sex magazines, videos, and nightclubs—moved from a focus on real-life sexual danger (rape, incest, domestic violence) to the world of sexual fantasy and sexual pleasure. This exploration addressed many lesbians' desire to break out of a sexuality assumed to



Cartoon by N. Leigh Dunlap

taining at least minimal legal protection for women are high. Nevertheless, this trend has alienated many lesbian activists who do want to challenge institutionalized systems of oppression, but who don't identify with the mainstream definition of feminism.

Then there's Andrea Dworkin. Many lesbians have come to target her for a hard-line, relentless critique of pornography and a portrayal of the male sexual organ as woman's timeless ruler. Given the prevalence of violence against women, her arguments have been convincing—up to the point where sex, as a mine field of pain, precluded any option for "politically correct" pleasure. To identify Dworkin here is not to dismiss her, for she has been a courageous and significant voice in the movement to stop violence against women. The trouble with Dworkin, though, is in part her reluctance to affirm sexual pleasure for women. Her analysis has concentrated on the atrocities leveled at women, and has, more often than not, left out a vision for the future which offered more hope than an alliance with Meese and the right-wing in opposing pornography.

Endless debates on pornography and sexual freedom, ranging from discussions on butch-femme roles, to lesbian S/M sex, further polarized us. These trends account, in part, for the evolving view of feminism as a stifling, rather than liberating, force. Many gays and lesbians began to equate feminism with a new moralism, proscriptive against an exploration of sex and issues of consent-oriented sexual dominance and submission.

This at least partial rejection of feminism brought many lesbians closer to gay men in an attempt to gain sexual freedom. Though not exactly embracing every feature of gay male sexuality, many lesbians—

be, because we were women, either non-existent, or soft and passive. Sexuality was to be claimed as a primary part of lesbian identity.

In this process, however, feminism was gutted, or viciously attacked. Take for example, "Charting the Gesbian" in a recent issue of New York's gay and lesbian magazine *Outweek*. The author outlines the "lesbian/gesbian" split. The "lesbian" is an outdated, boring, stereotyped feminist separatist dyke with an ugly wardrobe of flannel shirts and birkenstock sandals, with little interest in sex. The "gesbian" is the fun-loving, exciting, beautiful, sexually daring (à la gay male) dyke firmly rooted in the 80s.

Tongue in cheek? Perhaps. The gesbian analysis, however, doesn't lead us much towards a deeper self-awareness. Instead, it puts one "in" (but equally stereotyped, superficial, and dare I say it "male") identity in place of an outdated one. And, perhaps most significantly, it minimizes and ridicules a politics—in need of updating to be sure—which attempted to free women from male sexual objectification and violence.

These are difficult times. Even a simple definition of "lesbian" cannot go unchallenged. If the lesbian/gesbian split was disturbing, the implications of Jan Clausen's recent revelations in "When Lesbians Fall for Men," (*Outlook*, Winter 1990) are more unsettling. As quoted by *San Francisco Examiner* columnist Warren Hinckle (the straight press has grabbed up this one), *Outlook* co-publisher Kim Klausner speculates, "Lesbians are just more open-minded these days." If Jan Clausen's personal evolution is going to be used to portray lesbians who have come to their senses by choosing men over women, I object. Excuse my suspicion, but it resounds of my mother, who thinks I'm close-minded, and just



haven't found the "right man."

We are living in a peculiar era, one that sends us contradictory and polarized messages. It's hard sometimes even to identify what is "liberating." On the one hand, we have witnessed progressive changes spurred on by the movements for women's and sexual liberation in the 60s and early 70s. We now see more examples of women (albeit primarily white) moving into positions previously held exclusively by men, and lesbians receiving some forms of public legitimization: in Hollywood movies, daytime soap operas and prime-time serials, and even in *Cosmopolitan* magazine ads! On the other hand, we are subjected to such intense bigotry and violence that nothing at all appears to have changed.

Whether or not we're old enough to have been an activist two decades ago, most of us have identified flaws in old ways of thinking or organizing. Most of us probably like to think that we're less dogmatic. In 1990, we may be at another turning point, after years of working in the AIDS movement.

THE AIDS MOVEMENT

From the beginning, lesbians played a major part in building institutions supporting primarily gay men living with AIDS and ARC. We've fought for education, for access to experimental treatments, for increased government-financed research, and for a caring environment for people with AIDS (PWAs). It's not that our presence hasn't been acknowledged, or that we haven't been thanked for making a contribution. But still, our concerns and needs as lesbians are largely invisible in the AIDS movement.

For lesbians, AIDS has always been more than just a compelling issue. Its emergence came at a time when the lesbian movement was weak and fragmented. Its vibrancy drew many lesbians who had previously been active in feminist or separatist politics, and were looking for a new way to assert themselves and their sexuality as central to a politics of liberation. Some lesbians emerged from the Left, which had traditionally side-lined sexual politics. The AIDS movement offered many lesbians a place to regroup, not just with gay men, but with other lesbians. Working on AIDS was a way to be out. Regardless of age or experience, lesbians came to this new movement in defense of gay people, identifying the need to promote a positive view of homosexuality in the face of an increasingly hostile public environment. Despite large degrees of lesbian invisibility, association with gay male sexuality affirmed, at minimum, the undeniable reality of homosexual lifestyles.

Yet there have been consequences to working in a period when both the meaning and strength of feminism are waning. For many younger lesbians especially, who have had little direct experience of a

movement which managed to focus mass attention on lesbian liberation, today it's courageous men who become our personal heroes. It becomes unthinkable then to put our own concerns on an even par with gay men, who are facing death on a daily basis. It's hard for us to justify the need for, let alone even imagine, a powerful movement of our own.

Another real problem, one which comes from working directly with men, is dealing with large doses of sexism. Not surprisingly, we have often had to fight like hell just to be noticed. That includes having to justify the need for women's caucuses, and why we tire of hearing men tell us, "We'd get so much more done if the women would work more with us," or, "Why do we have to do another workshop on sexism—we did one last year..."

So how have we attempted to change this dynamic? Sometimes simply making women and lesbians visible has been the first step. The PISD (People with Immune System Disorders) Caucus within ACT NOW (AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize, and WIN) came together in large part at the insistence of first one lesbian and then many others, who were active in the AIDS movement, and also suffered from chronic fatigue syndrome. Within the AIDS movement, lesbians have consistently pushed for acknowledgment—and action based on that knowledge—that AIDS and immune system disease affect not just men, but lesbians and women. Lesbian activists have argued that among the identified risk groups, women of color and low-income and homeless women, have the lowest survival rate due to the health consequences of poverty.

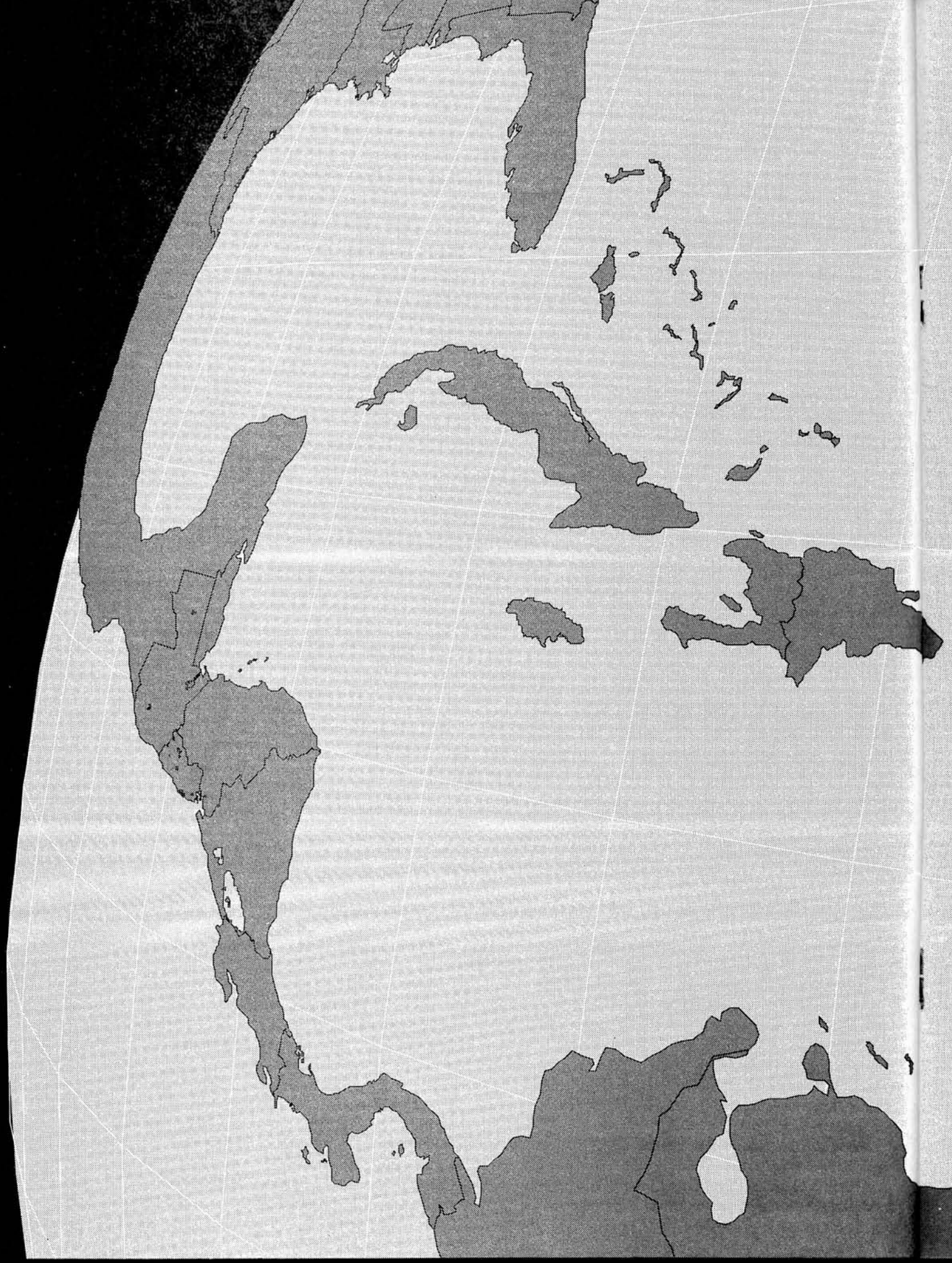
We've also organized educationals and actions to link the struggle for AIDS with broader issues affecting women and lesbians, such as reproductive rights.

It's important to say that while we point out some of the drawbacks and the problems that lesbians face in the AIDS movement, this is not to advocate our withdrawal. We must struggle to make our issues visible while recognizing that, even with a feminist rehaul, the AIDS movement cannot address our every need. Because we have different lives and aspirations than either straight women or gay men, lesbians will search for ways to address our specific demands. This will be our mode of survival. And yet, a lesbian movement cannot be driven by competition with straight women or gay men. Our interests overlap, and so must our movements. Even in its best form, the AIDS movement cannot replace a movement for gay and lesbian liberation, or a women's liberation movement.

Say, for example, that suddenly one of our most

see DYKETACTICS, p.40





PUERTO RICO PLEBISCITE OR FARCE?

by José López

Movimiento de Liberación
Nacional Puertorriqueño

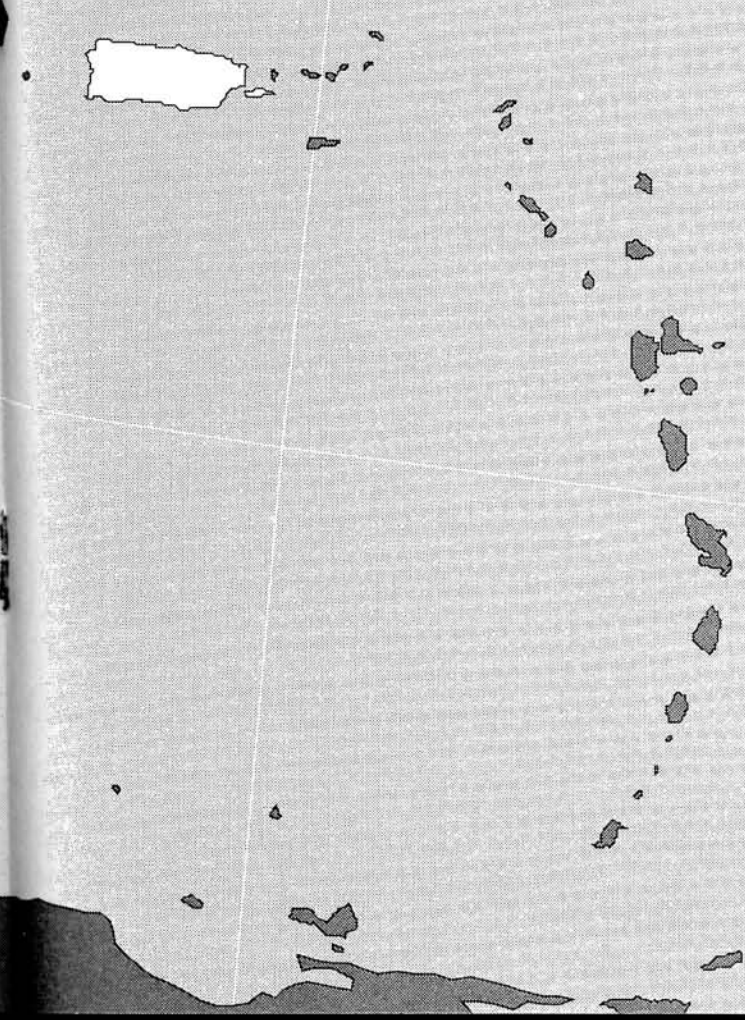
Early last year, President Bush precipitated a flurry of discussion and activity by suggesting that the time had come for the Puerto Rican people to decide their relationship to the U.S. through a referendum on the status of Puerto Rico. This was an astounding suggestion. In essence, Bush admitted that Puerto Rico is a colony and that the Puerto Rican people have never exercised self-determination. This admission only makes sense in the context of global contradictions faced by the U.S.—its huge deficit, the Soviet push to resolve regional conflicts, and international pressure to end colonialism.

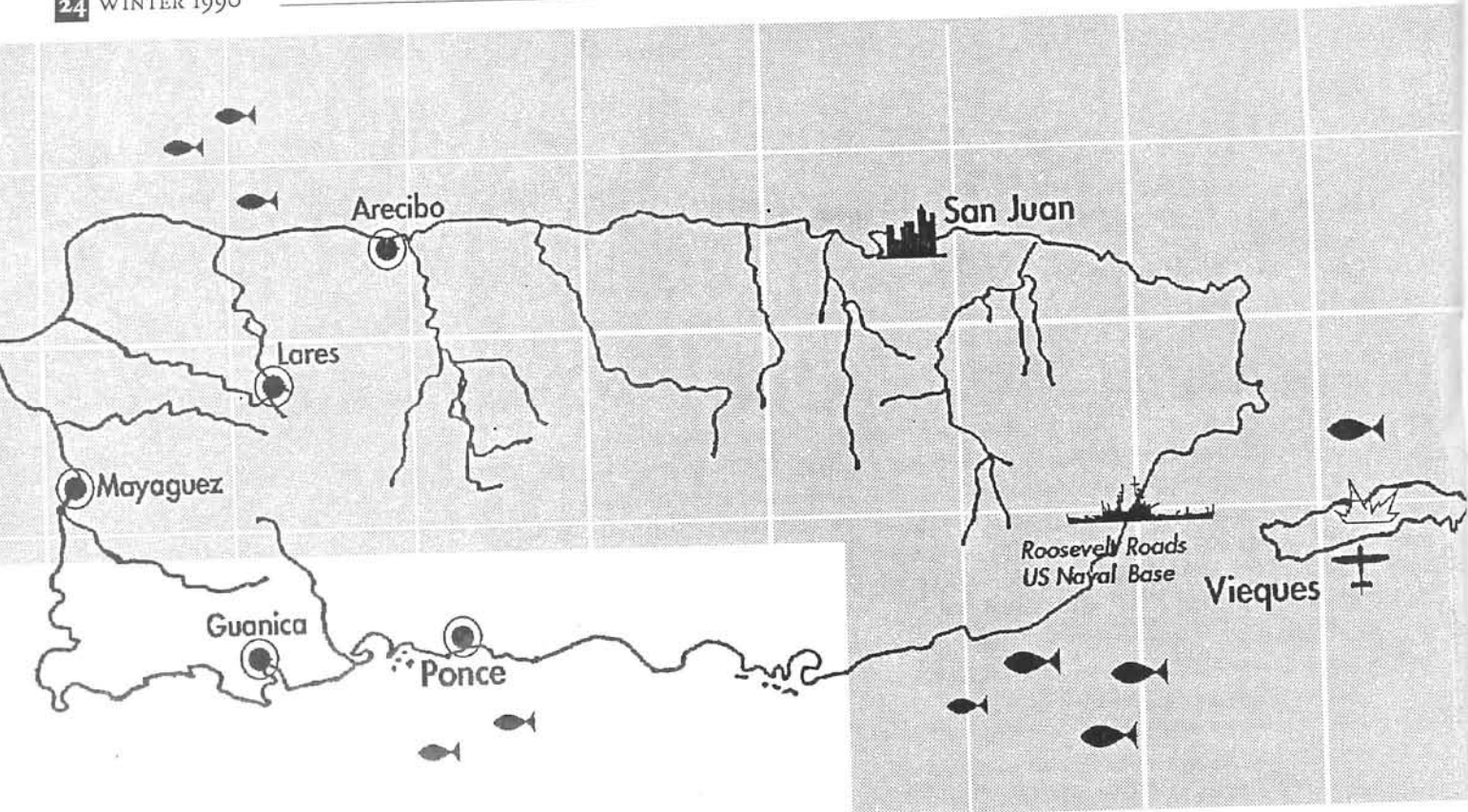
But the U.S. has no intention of letting Puerto Rico have true independence. The process Bush is promoting is nothing but a farce; whatever resolution results will continue in one form or another the economic and military domination of the island by the U.S. The danger, however, is that it will legitimize a relationship of dependency in the eyes of the world.

How should the Puerto Rican independence movement respond in this critical juncture? And how should progressive North Americans understand and support the struggle over the "status" process? At the end of August 1989, José López, First Secretary of the Movimiento de Liberación Nacional Puertorriqueño (M.L.N.)—a revolutionary organization of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.—spoke on this topic in San Francisco. We are pleased to present this edited transcript of his remarks.

IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF THE PROPOSED VOTE on Puerto Rico's status, we need to establish, first and foremost, that we're not really talking about a plebiscite, but a referendum. A referendum in a democratic society allows the people to express themselves on an issue, be it a bond issue or an alteration of some law; it's a form of initiative in which the people participate in the legislative process. But it has nothing to do with the sovereignty of a people.

Historically, one of the established processes by which colonized people can achieve their independence is a plebiscite. A plebiscite must meet certain minimum requirements established by U.N. Resolution 1514 in 1960. One of the main requirements is the transference of power to the colonial people themselves or to an international body as in the case of Namibia. The second requirement is the removal of all troops and repressive agencies of the colonial power. The third requirement is the freedom of all people that have been jailed for their activity in support of independence of that country and the





In Puerto Rico, a mass consciousness of the possibility of independence is being created.

cessation of all harassment and persecution of those people; and finally, economic reparations must be made to compensate for the colonial exploitation undertaken; 91 years of rule by the U.S. in the case of Puerto Rico. Those are minimum standards that the U.N. and international law require.

In the process Bush is proposing, the U.S. is not meeting any of those requirements.

Throughout Puerto Rican history, the U.S. has recognized that it has a problem, but they've never named the problem as being one of colonialism. On the one hand, there's been a history of U.S. initiatives to resolve the problem of Puerto Rico. On the other hand, there has been a series of initiatives by the Puerto Rican people.

A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

When General Miles began the conquest of Puerto Rico, he issued a proclamation. In it he said, "We have not come to make war upon a people that for centuries has been exploited and oppressed; we have come to bring you the liberties and freedoms of our constitution." Well, in actual fact, for two years,

the U.S. imposed martial law in Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans who wrote, who spoke, who did anything against the U.S. presence in Puerto Rico were jailed.

The U.S. entered Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898; it was not until December 10, 1898, practically six months later that the U.S. established complete control over the island. We have been told Puerto Ricans welcomed them with open arms. That is an historical lie. Puerto Ricans fought at every juncture. On August 13, 1898, a band of Puerto Rican rebels took over the town of Ciales, proclaimed the Republic of Puerto Rico, and held out for two weeks. The guerrilla force of Aguila Blanca was not stopped until 1902.

Between 1898 and 1900 Puerto Rico was ruled by martial law. In 1900 the United States introduced the Foraker Act, which governed Puerto Rico until 1917. The Foraker Act, the first Organic Act, gave Puerto Ricans the right to select representatives in the Chamber of Deputies. But really the governor—always a military man until 1940—and his cabinet made all the decisions.

Between 1917 and 1952, Puerto Rico was ruled by the second Organic Act, the Jones Act. That act established a bicameral legislature without much power, but, most importantly, made Puerto Ricans U.S. citizens. As a result, 25,000 Puerto Ricans were put under uniform in World War I; thousands more

went to fight in World War II and the Korean War. And in the Vietnam War, more Puerto Ricans fought and died than did citizens of any state in the Union.

During the period between 1917 and 1952 there were three U.S. initiatives to reform this colonial situation. The first one, the Campbell Amendment presented in 1922, called for the creation of something called the "Free Associated State" of Puerto Rico modeled on the Irish Free State which was proclaimed in 1922. The second attempt was the Tydings Bill of 1936 to grant Puerto Rico outright independence. Neither of these ever went very far. The third one was the Elective Governors Act of 1947; in 1948 Puerto Ricans were allowed to elect the first native Puerto Rican Governor.

Throughout this same period, Puerto Ricans organized their own initiatives for self-determination. In 1898, not only did people fight against the U.S. invasion, Eugenio Mariá de Hostos organized a movement called La Liga de Patriotas Puertorriqueña, that proposed that Washington give us a plebiscite to decide our future. In 1903, the independentist forces undertook their own plebiscite and determined that the overwhelming sentiment of the people was for independence.

In the late 20s and early 30s there was an upsurge of Puerto Rican nationalism under the leadership of Pedro Albizu Campos who proclaimed, "The Nationalist Party is the homeland organized to recapture its sovereignty." And he called for a constitutional assembly which would create a constitution to free Puerto Rico. It was one of the first constitutional initiatives by Puerto Ricans, refusing to recognize the U.S. and proposing to create our own government. Some members of Congress actually supported this, particularly when the Tydings Bill was presented. But that same year Albizu and the leadership of the Nationalist Party were imprisoned for nearly ten years in Atlanta, Georgia.

In 1948, when Albizu came out of jail, the Nationalist Party undertook a massive campaign of consciousness raising. All over the world after the Second World War, people were demanding their independence. By 1948 the Nationalist Party had gained observer status in the U.N. and the students at the University of Puerto Rico led the most massive uprising in the history of the University and closed it for six months. There was an upsurge among the veterans who had come back from the war, where they had faced discrimination; more Puerto Ricans were going into the army. And there was a major agitation among those sectors. There seemed to be a mobilizing of the whole Puerto Rican people.

The U.S. saw that it had to do something with Puerto Rico. The first thing they did was to undertake a very repressive campaign led by Louis Johnson, Under-Secretary of War, to wipe out the

Nationalist Party. Secondly, the U.S. responded by adopting the third Organic Act, Law 600, calling for the Puerto Ricans to draw up their own constitution, modeled after the U.S. Constitution, to be approved by the U.S. Congress. The independentistas decided not to participate. When the constitution was presented to the U.S. Congress, the preamble was done away with. Why? Because it said people had a right to universal education; everyone had a right to a job and universal health care. And the senators, at the height of the Cold War, said, "This is a socialist document, let's do away with it." And they basically rewrote the constitution of Puerto Rico. And on July 25, 1952, they told the world that now Puerto Rico was the great Commonwealth.

COMMONWEALTH OR COLONY?

What is a commonwealth? Literally, a commonwealth can only exist in a monarchical structure. Two sovereign peoples decide that for the common good of both, they will give up certain sovereign powers to the monarchy. But the U.S. is not a monarchical system. You have the "Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," for example, because originally the thirteen colonies were held together by the Articles of Confederation with every colony having its own sovereignty, but giving up certain rights. But in 1789 the Constitution was adopted in order to move away from a confederacy to a federal system. Once the federal system was adopted, there was no way for any entity to exist outside of the Union. When the South attempted to do that by declaring the confederacy of the South, the Civil War resulted. And the Civil War settled once and for all that no state could exist outside of the Union; no state could nullify the law of the land. So a commonwealth is an impossibility within the framework of the U.S. Constitution.

Moreover, there is no mention of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in the Puerto Rican Constitution; it says *Estado Libre Asociado*, which is even worse. How could a free associated state exist within the federal structure?

But in 1952 it was adopted. The U.S. told the U.N. that Puerto Rico's colonial question had been resolved.

But still the colonial problem of Puerto Rico persisted. So in 1960, they created the "Status Commission" to study the political status of Puerto Rico. After six years they recommended that a plebiscite be held at the initiative of the Puerto Rican legislature, which was controlled by the Popular Democratic Party at that time. This plebiscite was not something that came out of the U.S. Congress; it was not binding at all. It was the Puerto Rican legislature asking the Puerto Rican people to make a recommendation. And, if the Puerto Rican people,

perchance, chose independence, they would have to wait 25 years before it could be considered by the United States Congress.

All the Puerto Rican independentist forces decided this was ridiculous; they again refused to be part of it; and they mounted an extremely effective boycott of the plebiscite. Nevertheless, in 1967 the vote was held and people cite that as the vote that resolved once and for all Puerto Rico's status.

Now in 1989 President Bush comes out with an idea that instead of the Puerto Rican legislature, the U.S. Congress should propose a referendum. All the Puerto Ricans can do is make recommendations. This referendum will be tailor-made by the U.S.

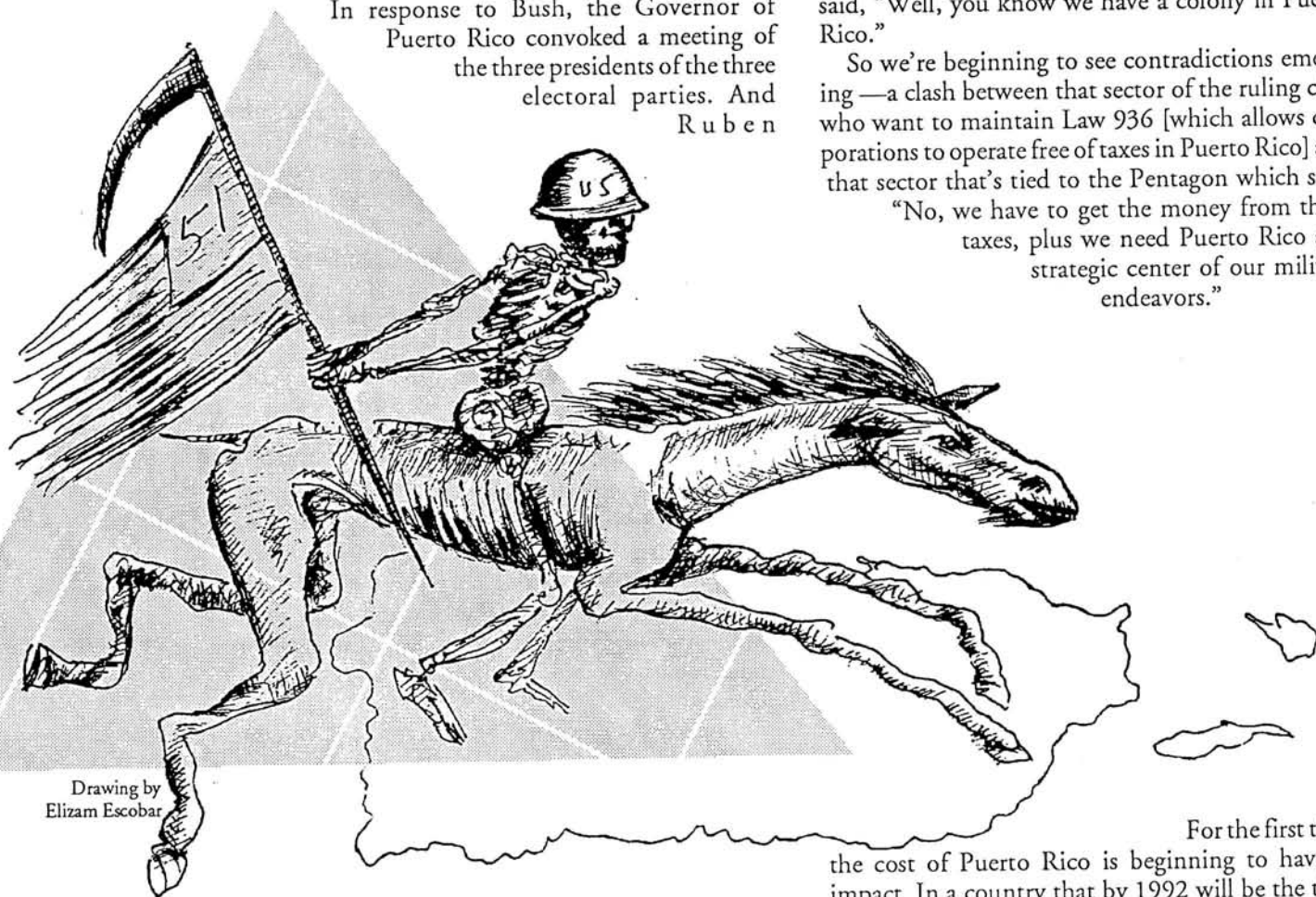
In response to Bush, the Governor of Puerto Rico convoked a meeting of the three presidents of the three electoral parties. And

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threw out their current president who had signed the letter, and brought back Romero-Barcelo, the former governor. The Popular Democratic Party didn't know what to do, because they had literally denied their history as a party by signing that letter.

Within a matter of months, Senators Johnston and McClure, co-chairs of the Senate Natural Resources Committee, put a bill through the committee to sponsor the referendum. During the committee hearings, you began to hear comments such as Senator Dale Bumpers of Arkansas saying, "Well, to expect from the Puerto Ricans that an independent Puerto Rico should maintain our military bases in perpetuity is colonialist." And Senator Paul Simon said, "Well, you know we have a colony in Puerto Rico."

So we're beginning to see contradictions emerging—a clash between that sector of the ruling class who want to maintain Law 936 [which allows corporations to operate free of taxes in Puerto Rico] and that sector that's tied to the Pentagon which says, "No, we have to get the money from those taxes, plus we need Puerto Rico as a strategic center of our military endeavors."



Drawing by
Elizam Escobar

Berrios, president of the Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), in a brilliant political move, suggested that the three parties write a joint letter to Bush stating that since 1898 the Puerto Rican people had not been consulted as to their political status. In one maneuver, Berrios threw out all of the lies that the U.S. had perpetuated around 1952 and 1967 when we were told that the colonial problem had been resolved, because the Puerto Rican people had been consulted.

The three presidents signed the letter and sent it to Washington. It wasn't until later that the statehood party realized what they had done. And they

For the first time, the cost of Puerto Rico is beginning to have an impact. In a country that by 1992 will be the third capitalist power in the world, not the first but the third; in a country with a deficit of trillions of dollars, such as that of the U.S., which has some very serious problems if it decides to raise taxes; how are you going to keep Puerto Rico afloat? People are beginning to ask, "How much is this going to cost us?"

The statehood party has an interesting line. In Puerto Rico they say, "Statehood is for the poor. Our per capita income is only \$5,000 per year, while in the poorest state in the Union, Mississippi, it's \$9,000 a year. We're going to get all of this federal aid; we'll get \$9 billion in federal aid." To the U.S. Congress they say, "We will provide \$13 billion in

taxes." So some serious contradictions are arising.

On the international level, the U.S. also faces serious problems. Here, the Puerto Rican independence movement has created a consciousness that is very difficult to do away with overnight. This year at the U.N., the U.S. attempted to get Venezuela to present an alternative resolution postponing consideration of the colonial case of Puerto Rico for a number of years until the U.S. had resolved this "internal matter." But neither Venezuela nor anyone else was willing to present an alternative resolution. For the first time, the PLO representative spoke in support of Puerto Rican independence; the ANC, Panama, Nicaragua, the various left groupings in Venezuela, the representative of the Second International, the representative of the Non-Aligned Nations, and all of the countries that voted spoke in favor of Puerto Rican independence. And by a vote of 9 to 2, the Decolonization Committee decided to maintain the issue of Puerto Rico on its agenda. And that is an extremely significant victory.

NORTHERN IRELAND IN THE U.S.

Perhaps for the first time in Puerto Rico, a mass consciousness of the possibility of independence is being created. In July, the Senate Committee held hearings in Puerto Rico. And Carlos Gallisá of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP) and Juan Mari Brás from Causa Común Independentista challenged the Committee's right to come to Puerto Rico to ask the Puerto Rican people about anything. In essence they said, "You're not going to ask us questions. We've come to ask you questions." And they challenged their intentions to hold a referendum in violation of international law. At one point, Gallisá said, "Well, if you choose to impose statehood on us, then you're not going to have a 51st state; you're going to have a Northern Ireland." The next day nearly 100,000 Puerto Ricans marched in front of the hearing. As far as the eye could see were Puerto Rican flags. And the chants you heard were "Yankee Go Home," and "Johnston, you don't understand, these people are not for sale."

For the first time in the history of the independence movement, a unitary process is taking place, that involves every organization outside the Puerto Rican Independence Party to begin to map out an opposition to the U.S.-sponsored referendum. All reject the referendum. Some are saying we should begin a campaign to boycott now; others are saying let's wait. But in the process, what can we all do to oppose the Johnston proposal?

From the beginning the Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (MST) took the position that we needed to set the tone for a boycott of the referendum and begin to do work to that end. Various other formations in Puerto Rico agree with this position.

The PSP has condemned the referendum process, but wants to wait before calling for a boycott. The position of Juan Mari Brás and Causa Común Independentista is that at this point a boycott is premature, because work can be done to stop the Johnston proposal. And particularly if enough work is done in this country to call attention to the boycott, because if we wait it may be too late. But we don't believe these two positions are in conflict. If enough work is done on a mass level, it will be very difficult for the Johnston Bill to pass. And perhaps out of the whole process, a Puerto Rican initiative can come to the fore that all of the Puerto Rican independentist forces can support.

At the same time, we need to expose the hypocrisy of the U.S. At this time, the United States is telling the world that it is undertaking a democratizing process, a decolonizing process. But at the same time, the colonial government of Puerto Rico holds the files of 125,000 people whom it considers subversives. In Puerto Rico it is impossible to hold a decent job if you are an independentista; you cannot really openly advocate independence, without having some negative counter-measures taken against you and your family; the FBI, the CIA and the NSA have thousands of Puerto Ricans on each of their files. There are dozens of Puerto Ricans in U.S. prisons; there are 14 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and another 6 Puerto Rican political prisoners; there are nearly a dozen Puerto Ricans that are being persecuted and face charges at this point; we have Puerto Ricans who are exiled or who have disappeared.

We are proposing—not even as a pre-condition, but as a gesture of good faith, to demonstrate to the world that it is serious about this process—that the U.S. undertake the following three demands:

- It must cease all persecution and harassment of Puerto Rican independentistas.
- It must stop all legal processes against Puerto Rican independentistas, such as the people arrested on the 30th of August, 1985 and those charges must be dropped.
- All Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and political prisoners must be freed.

In the very short period between now and 1991, we must build a movement, on the one hand, that detains the process of this referendum and, on the other hand, that develops the consciousness among our people in our community that will ensure that Puerto Rico will be a free and independent nation. With this in mind, it is imperative that all of us make the issue of Puerto Rico a priority in our political work. □

El Salvador Offensive

"Our Expectations Were Surpassed"

credit: Adam Kufeld

Interview with
Luis Flores,
U.S. Representative
of the FMLN

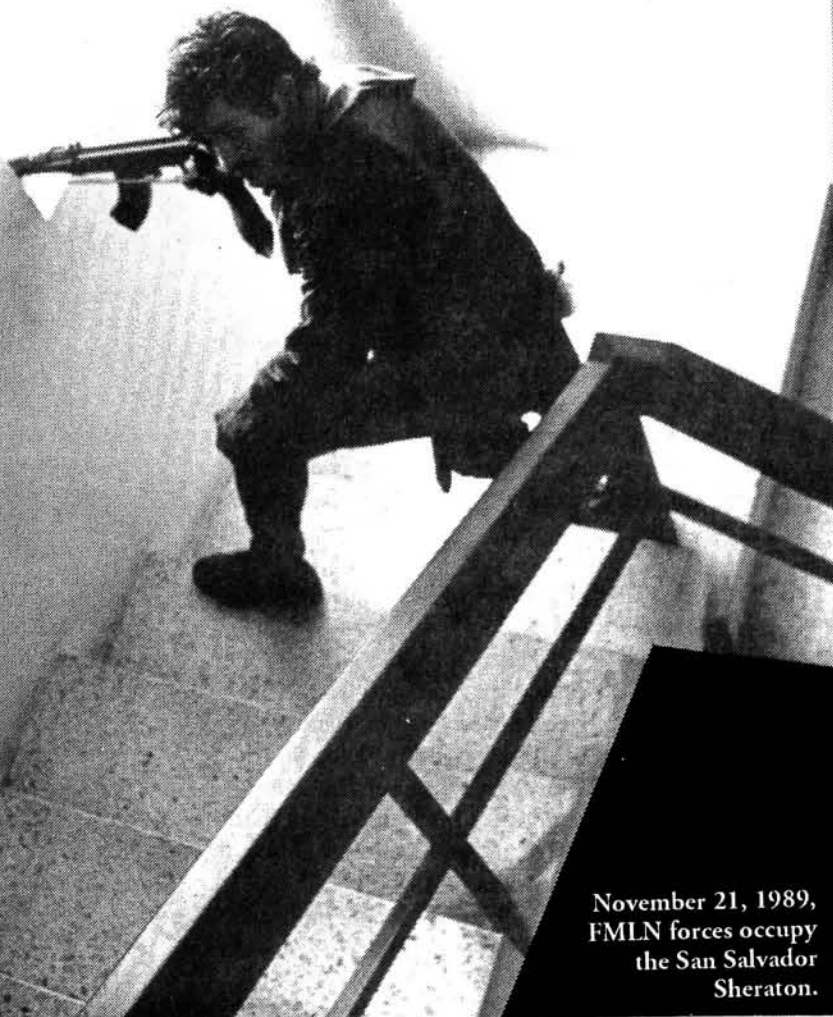
ON NOVEMBER 11, 1989, THE FARABUNDO Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador launched its most powerful offensive in 10 years of war. Responding to an escalation of government repression, including the bombing of the offices of the trade union federation FENESTRAS on October 31, the FMLN attacked six major army garrisons and brought the war into the heart of the capital city of San Salvador. The Salvadoran government of Alfredo Cristiani declared a state of seige and unleashed a full-scale aerial bombardment of FMLN-controlled working class neighborhoods in San Salvador.

On November 16, in an action that provoked worldwide condemnation, Salvadoran army troops invaded the University of Central America and slaughtered six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her young daughter. As we go to press, the FMLN is maintaining positions in and around San Salvador and other major cities. We talked with Luis Flores, U.S. representative of the FMLN, in San Francisco on December 15, 1989 and again on January 1, 1990.

Breakthrough: Could you explain the FMLN's strategy and goals in the current offensive?

Luis Flores: The FMLN's strategy is based on the failure of a real negotiating process as a way to resolve the conflict in El Salvador. ARENA's goal since they took power has been the military defeat of the

November 21, 1989,
FMLN forces occupy
the San Salvador
Sheraton.



FMLN. They came to the negotiating table with the clear purpose of gaining time to consolidate their program and political objectives by going into a prolonged period of dialogue. In the two Mexico meetings and one in Costa Rica, ARENA tried to stop the war without giving any concessions in exchange. After the Costa Rica meeting, it was clear to the FMLN that the ARENA government was seeking the total extermination of the popular movement. On a daily basis, they were increasing repressive actions against the trade unions, the political parties, everyone they considered to be in opposition to ARENA's goals.

The FMLN was clear from the beginning that these were ARENA's intentions, because the main characteristic of a fascist party like ARENA is the extermination of all democratic opposition. At the same time, it was necessary to expose the real nature of the ARENA government to the international community and to the Salvadoran people.

The first objective of this offensive was to really create the conditions for a political solution in El Salvador, one that would include all sectors of Salvadoran society committed to this process.

A second objective was to prove to the Salvadoran people and to the international community that the FMLN is a capable and powerful political and military force. We consider that we totally fulfilled this objective. The FMLN has proved that without its participation as an integral part, no solution is possible in El Salvador.

A third objective was to show the Salvadoran people that the Salvadoran army is not invincible and can be defeated, and that there are real chances for a popular victory in El Salvador. Of course, we are not saying our first option is popular victory. We always maintain that a political solution is our first option. But we are ready to continue this offensive, and, if necessary, to win a total victory for the people of El Salvador.

BT: Is the FMLN calling for a popular insurrection?

LF: Before we started this offensive, we analyzed the situation of the masses in El Salvador and discovered two fundamental obstacles. First was the effect of these past nine years of repression on the mentality of the masses: people fear the Salvadoran army. The second obstacle is the dire economic situation of each family in El Salvador. This has an influence on the minds of the workers because there is more than 60 percent unemployment in El Salvador and the workers are not ready to risk their jobs.

How could we overcome these two obstacles? We have to prove to the workers and to the entire population of El Salvador that the FMLN is capable militarily. We also have to prove that the people have the power to stop the repression and to establish a

better society, better economic conditions; but to do that they have to overthrow the regime in power.

Is the FMLN capable of defeating the army? That was a question in the people's mind. How could we answer it? Only by defeating the Salvadoran army on the battlefield. We know that to provoke a massive or even partial uprising, we have to gain the confidence of the Salvadoran population. That's why, in this first attempt from November 11 until November 18, we expected to have some support, but not enough for a *massive* insurrection.

Nevertheless, our expectations were surpassed by the degree of incorporation of the masses into different tasks, for example, making barricades, providing food and water to the combatants and evacuating the wounded combatants. And this has been important.

Right now the key to gaining the people's confidence in victory will be the FMLN's capacity to maintain our positions in the main cities. But this won't last for a long time. We're talking about for a short period of time maintaining positions inside the cities, but rapidly moving to another attempt to defeat the Salvadoran army. This has to be a combination of a military effort with a strong political effort from the Salvadoran population. Right now we are training the new people who joined the FMLN in the past offensive and preparing the conditions to launch a new military effort, if the political efforts for an agreement fail.

BT: When the Salvadoran army murdered the Jesuits, they eliminated a key force that had been calling for a political solution to the conflict. Given the polarization in Salvadoran society, is a political solution possible?

LF: First, the political solution is going to be part of *any* solution. In El Salvador right now, it's impossible to pursue the establishment of a government representing only a sector of the Salvadoran society. Why? Because this conflict created so many political expressions and so many different economic and political interests. If you want to establish a government which represents only *one* economic and political interest, you will have to confront the other interests and you will never reach a stable or peaceful situation.

Even if we had a strategic military advantage and could militarily defeat the Salvadoran army, we would still have to negotiate the surrender of the Salvadoran army. But at the same time, you will have to deal with the problem of U.S. aggression. To do that you will have to sit down with the U.S. and bring the broadest spectrum of forces supporting a new government; and to do that you will need to establish agreements between these forces to avoid years of military, political and economic aggression from the United States.

How do we envision a political solution for El

Salvador? The only way is if every sector is represented in this negotiation. The only thing which is not clear is the participation of ARENA. Why? Because they are not favoring a political solution. But that's their problem. They are going against the will of practically the entire nation at this point. And the ARENA government is daily more isolated from practically every sector of Salvadoran society.

Many people can see that a negotiated solution between the FMLN and ARENA is not possible. We can agree totally that's not possible at all, if you see it simply as the FMLN and ARENA. But in El Salvador the political solution will include all the different political powers existing right now and that's what makes it possible.

BT: So you include the Christian Democrats in this?

LF: Of course, to the extent that the Christian Democrats favor a political solution. At this point, you cannot be rigid in looking at the Christian Democrats. Right now the Christian Democrats are indicating they favor a political solution and that's why their participation is possible right now.

BT: When you speak of a political solution though, what are the terms of it? What realistically can you envision as the kinds of agreements that could be made about changes in the Salvadoran society?

LF: If you think in terms of two poles, for example, capitalism versus socialism, you'll never find any solution for El Salvador. But if you approach the situation by asking, for example, "What is the economic situation of the workers and what do you have to do to improve that situation," you begin to find the ways to talk about what exactly you're looking for in the future of El Salvador.

What do we consider necessary to make possible a political solution right now? First, the Tandoná* must be removed from control over the armed forces. Without this, it's not possible to establish a just system in El Salvador.

It will also be necessary to constitute a government of broad consensus and, of course, the FMLN has to be an active part of this government.

The other important thing is the judicial system and human rights. There is an urgent need to respect human rights and to establish an equitable judicial system for everybody in El Salvador.

The economic project is a more complex problem, because you cannot merge the ideas of ARENA about establishing a Chilean model with our ideas about establishing a mixed economy. We will never

reconcile these two models; that's impossible. As we propose to have elections, the winner of those elections will have to establish the economic model, because it is impossible to achieve any agreement in this aspect. What is most urgent at the current moment for El Salvador is to resolve fundamental political issues in order to stabilize the country, and then create the conditions for either an elected government or a government of consensus to implement an economic model.

BT: Do you feel that the U.S. move into Panama signals a willingness of the United States to militarily intervene directly in the rest of Central America and particularly in El Salvador?

LF: With this action in Panama, the United States is going against world history, because right now a new political environment around the world has been established. In Latin America the invasion was unpopular; no government could support it, because this would legitimize future invasions. Even Pinochet condemned it. At the same time, the attitude of the Soviet Union has been to allow revolutionary changes in the socialist bloc, maintaining a policy of respect for self-determination.

In the U.S., the administration has been able to control the publicity which reaches the North American people. The major media played an important role in creating support for this invasion by portraying Manuel Noriega as a monster, an assassin and a drug-trafficker. But the real intention in invading Panama is to keep control of the Panama Canal. The United States didn't want to have a government in Panama in 1999 which would fight for the country's sovereignty and self-determination. They wanted a puppet government so they could manipulate the agreements between Torrijos and Carter and maintain fundamental control of the canal.

It's very difficult to conclude how this invasion will affect El Salvador or Nicaragua. We in the FMLN believe that if the United States is willing to invade Panama, we have to be prepared for a possible invasion of El Salvador. We cannot expect the U.S. to respect either international law or international treaties. We cannot expect it to respect the will of the countries of Latin America. Our task is to be ready to respond in the case of an attack in the near future.

At the same time, the FMLN concludes that instead of slowing down our actions, now is the time to increase them and try to define the situation in El Salvador. If we have enough military/political strength, the U.S. will consider not intervening. If they see an easy victory, they will decide to intervene. That's why, at this moment, our obligation is to increase our actions and put a new effort into both the military battlefield and the diplomatic level.

* The Tandoná, the Salvadoran Military Academy class of 1967, includes ARENA President-for-life Roberto D'Aubisson and key leaders of the Salvadoran military.

BT: What impact have all the changes in the socialist world—the development of perestroika, the dialogue between the United States and the Soviet Union—had and what pressures are those creating on the situation in El Salvador?

LT: First, it is important to mention that the process of rectification has not only been going on in the Soviet Union. Revolutionary movements in Latin America, Asia and Africa have also been implementing a process of rectification. The Sandinista revolution in 1979 was not the same as the Cuban revolution in 1959. And you see two different models. Why? Because it was clear to the new revolutionaries, the young revolutionaries, that socialism had to be improved with new ideas—with a revolution within the revolution.

How do we understand this point? After all those years under centralized economic systems in the Eastern European countries, you see a lot of failures—not because the system is a complete failure, but because different phenomena were spreading within those governments; for example, corruption, ineffectiveness, the inability to meet people's needs. Those are concrete problems, but they present a mirror to the new revolutionary movements around the world. Other countries are going to be more flexible about their need to maintain economic ties with any country in the world in order to establish the basis for the construction of socialism. That's a need.

All this debate, of course, affected the thinking of the FMLN. We had already begun to be more flexible in the early 80s about the positions we had in the 70s, when we called for the establishment of a socialist government. We began to understand that wasn't a real possibility in these times, because we needed first to revitalize our country and to create possibilities for its development. And we could not expect to get much help from the socialist bloc. That was a reality we had to confront.

What conditions are needed to attract economic support from the capitalist countries? You have to give some kind of concessions. But we are clear that we're not going to give up our principles and the objectives we are fighting for.

Right now there is com-

motion in the Eastern European countries, but we see that commotion as good for socialism because it was in a stagnant situation and needed an overhaul to really try to fulfill the needs of the peoples of those countries.

Right now the international environment is putting pressure for political solutions around the world. This is in part because the Soviet Union needs stabilization to make possible the changes to advance socialism. The United States is in economic trouble also and needs a period of stabilization to make readjustments in their economy. Those are the fundamental conditions behind this promotion of political solutions around the world.

But at the same time, many people have been talking about the death of armed struggle as a political option. We consider the armed struggle as a legitimate option for all the oppressed people in the world. If there are injustices in Africa, armed struggle is legitimate. If there are injustices in Latin America, armed struggle is legitimate and nobody can deny that. In El Salvador, you see the fascist government killing hundreds of civilians. Who is going to come and say to us, you are an illegitimate force? Nobody has the moral authority to question the armed struggle in El Salvador.

BT: The recent offensive in El Salvador has brought about an intensification of the movement here against U.S. intervention and we'd like to know what you see as the tasks of the movement in this country?

see FMLN, p. 39



One of four bomb craters in the working class neighborhood of Soyapango resulting from Air Force bombing

SPIKE DID THE RIGHT THING

by Kamal Hassan
New Afrikan Peoples
Organization

DO *THE RIGHT THING* HAS BECOME ONE OF the most controversial films ever produced on the subject of race relations in the u.s.a. It has been criticized, reviewed, applauded and condemned by critics, politicians, activists, artists and just plain ordinary folk.

It has been applauded for being Black Nationalistic, attacked for not being Nationalistic enough, and condemned for its "neo-nationalistic" overtones. Spike Lee, the film's writer, director and star, has been congratulated for producing an honest portrayal of the people and social dynamics existing in today's New Afrikan community. He has also been accused of displaying a profound inability to challenge the conventional portrayals of those same people and dynamics. Hard to imagine that all of the above refer to the same movie, isn't it?

The numbers of seemingly contradictory views on *DTRT* are, of course, a function of the political and cultural perspectives (and objectives) of those who have given them. But one of the reasons that this film has been analyzed to death, has to do with the fact that an inordinate (and often unfair) amount of pressure is usually placed upon any New Afrikan who excels in an area that is not considered our "turf."

I am reminded of Debbie Thomas, an Olympic ice skater who had a chance to be the first New Afrikan to earn a winter games gold medal in her sport. What Debbie had to bear, in addition to the expected nervousness and jitters, was a visceral understanding that her people's collective image was riding on her performance. Her triumph would be an argument against those who argued for years that Blacks could not be world-class skaters. Her failure would be one more example of Black ineptitude in a "white" sport. Clearly unable to tote all of that racist baggage, Debbie turned in a sub-par performance and ended up in third place.

In similar fashion, far more has been asked of Spike Lee and *Do the Right Thing* than one person, or one movie, can possibly deliver. The dearth of meaningful New Afrikan films in this country has caused an overreaction to the few that have come along. Few people are satisfied because each person with an axe to grind expects their views to be fully and favorably presented: Nationalist, integrationist, Rastafarian, Christian, Muslim, feminist (Black and white), gay/lesbian, Marxist, etc. We too often tend to evaluate this film less as a piece of political/social art, and more on how well our "issues" were presented. It is in this milieu of "purposeful criticism" that I offer my remarks on Spike's latest film and some of the arguments it has inspired.

Spike Lee should be congratulated for the forthright manner in which he has approached one of Hollywood's most taboo subjects. Using humor, hate and horror, he has skillfully exposed the damage

that u.s. economic and racial oppression have caused in New Afrikan communities: The streets are crowded with unemployed young men. There are plenty of children, but few real fathers around. The few older men left in "the hood" are either winos or "ain't got no job and ain't lookin' for one" bums. Nobody Black in the neighborhood owns anything. The young have little respect and no time for the old. Tension is so high that just steppin' on someone's new Air Jordans could cause a mob scene.

These images have produced knee-jerk reactions in both Black and white leftists. In their view, these are negative stereotypes that prevent an understanding of the diversity of Black lifestyles. They don't seem to understand that Spike never intended to show all of the different things that Black folks are into; his focus was on life in Bed-Stuy and by extension, the "projects" across america.

Recent statistics tend to give credibility to Lee's vision: Over 50 percent of the households in economically depressed New Afrikan communities are headed by single women. The unemployment rates for youth in these places are also above 50 percent. Alcohol is the number one cause of drug-related health problems among our people, not only in the "ghettos" but for all classes of New Afrikans in the u.s. empire. There has also been a perceptible decline in our people's collective belief that they can improve these conditions themselves. Of this, Dr. John Henrike Clark has said, "We are the most wounded, the most alienated, the most confused and potentially the most powerful Black people on the face of the earth."

Many of those accusing Spike of simple stereotyping are either unwilling or unable to honestly confront the intergenerational effects of u.s. colonialism on our people. Rather than confronting the legitimate problems that Lee's movie identifies (drug abuse, unemployment, the attack on the Black family, our growing sense of powerlessness), they seem to be chastising him for daring to portray New Afrikans as anything but healthy, heroic indestructibles who have emerged practically unscathed from more than three centuries of economic, social and political degradation.

It is in this area of characterization and portrayal that *DTRT* has come under some of its heaviest criticism. Bell Hooks, in an insightful review of the movie in the October 1989 issue of *Z Magazine*, complains that "practically every character in *Do The Right Thing* has already been 'seen,' translated, interpreted, somewhere before..."

In one sense, Ms. Hooks is right. Seeing winos and people out of work is truly nothing new in Black films. But Spike gives his street characters some things that most of the stereotypical portrayals of us lack: dignity, a true concern for the condition of life around them, and a lack of tolerance for disrespect.

An important example of this is played out in the relationship between Mother Sister, the respected neighborhood matriarch, and Da Mayor, the wino. At first she continually rejects him because he reminds her too much of her first husband—drunk and irresponsible. But she begins to soften as he courts her with flowers and kind words. By the end of the film, after Da Mayor has shown his love and concern for others by repeatedly risking his life to save people in danger, the two begin a tender relationship.

Three corner bums (ML, Coconut Sid, and Sweet Dick Willie) turn out to be the wisest people in the neighborhood. Their nonstop rap is about how our people have been mistreated, hijacked and hamstrung in america. Not activists themselves, these brothers don't come up with revolutionary answers to the questions they raise, but the point is that they care about what they see happening around them.

*Those accusing Spike
of simple stereotyping
are unwilling to
honestly confront
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colonialism on
Black people.*

Some have argued that the white characters in the film have more depth than the Black ones. One need only look closely at Mookie (the character Spike plays) to see that this isn't true. Through this character Lee raises the issue of the constant struggle (personally and socially) between the individualistic values of a capitalistic society and the demands associated with allegiance to "the race."

Mookie's world revolves around "gettin' paid" (making money). He has a job because his employers are too afraid of the neighborhood to deliver pizza themselves. It is he who is asked to remove an unruly Black patron from the pizzeria. But he accepts his role as "middleman" because he has few alternatives. However, his sense of self-respect causes him to resist by doing his job on his own terms: late, slow, between breaks and phone calls.

Some misguided folk have even argued that this conforms to the stereotype of the Black man as shiftless and lazy. That attitude shows a real lack of understanding of the forms that rebellion can take.

Of Mookie, Ms. Hooks writes, "Mookie is the hero of this film. Articulate, aware, shrewd, he has the freedom and power to make choices.... Just before he enters the [racial] conflict he is sitting at a distance, looking at the crowd, contemplative, united with his sister, who is also an onlooker. They sit apart bonded as a family. It is at this point in the film that Mookie ceases to run interference between the black underclass and the white entrepreneur Sal." Mookie is truly a "round" character, one with a full range of positive and negative aspects. It is again, too much to ask that every Black person in the film be as thoroughly examined as he is. What's more, it isn't even necessary.

Spike Lee's decision to pose both the ideas of Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in this film has caused him to be criticized by believers on both sides. Those that are pro-Malcolm say the residents of Spike's Bed-Stuy were too moderate in their reactions to oppression. They wanted "wall integration" instead of economic independence. They busted out 60s style and burned down stuff instead of clockin' the cops who killed the homey Radio Raheem.

Integrationists like Ms. Hooks decry the film's "neo-nationalism." It bothers her that the film at several points expresses the idea that we are "safest" among our own kind. It is felt that this promotes an "us and them" mentality that inhibits the ability of "black people [to] develop solidarity with folks unlike ourselves [read: white] who share similar political commitments." Hooks even goes as far as to blame Spike Lee for the lack of white response to the scene where a young Black man is killed by the police. Since when has the white-controlled media responded with collective outrage at the death of a young Black male when that event couldn't be used

to defame and criminalize the Black community? Remember the death of Arthur McDuffie? Of Michael Stewart? Of Yusuf Bilal here in Los Angeles when the *LA Times* captioned a picture of the Highway Patrolman who killed him with "another hard day on the job?" No, nothing has changed in this regard, and Spike shouldn't be held responsible for that which he did not create.

Lee seems to have a pretty clear understanding of the social dynamics in New Afrikan communities in 1989. For the most part, the masses of our people are still at the "burnin' and lootin'" stage when it comes to retaliation against our oppressor. This means that often our outrage is expressed in spontaneous rebellions that destroy white property in our communities. Only occasionally does our rage reach the soldier cops who are often responsible for it.

However, integrationism is still strong among New Afrikans because the Nationalist organizations have not yet convincingly presented their cases to the masses of our people. What we need is a mass political education campaign that gives us an understanding of our possibilities for growth and self-development, not only as individuals, but as a nation of Afrikan people. We must also build institutions and organizations that can help translate these possibilities into effective means of educating, providing for, and protecting our people. No, we do not seek simple "separation," but self-determination as an independent, self-governing people.

Intelligently, *DTRT* does not impose a solution on us. Spike Lee counterposes the ideas of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X for us to pick, choose or synthesize. His hope seems to be that people will forge their own solutions if they have a clear understanding of what is going on around them and struggle to "do the right thing." In this sense, part of a socially conscious artist's job is to point out where we need to concentrate our efforts. He has done it well. □

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Sex, Truth, and HERstory

*A History of Their Own:
Women in Europe from
Prehistory to the Present
Volumes I & II*

by Bonnie S. Anderson
and Judith P. Zinsser
Published by Harper & Row

Reviewed by
Judith Mirkinson

THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IS ONE OF the cornerstones of human society. We have been oppressed since the beginning of time. We've been told that it is our gender that is at fault. Because of it, we have been taught to think of ourselves as inferior human beings. Many times we have been kept almost like slaves. Our sexuality has been called evil and the root of our problems.

A hen is not a bird and a woman is not a person.
- Russian proverb

The male is by nature superior and the female inferior; and the one rules and the other is ruled.
- Aristotle, 4th century B.C.

I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.
- Genesis 3:16



The biological division of labor, the fact that we're the ones that have children and reproduce the generations has always been looked at as the root of women's oppression. But this can't be the sole reason; care of children could have been shared; even in times of acute scarcity when survival was the main issue. Men also feared and envied women. The mystery that surrounds reproduction and everything

some of our ideological constraints. Yet by not knowing the extent of our oppression, we really cannot understand how to break free; we are still bound by a male supremacist ideology/mentality.

Going back in time helps us understand this better. Thousands of years before the birth of Christ, women's subordination was justified and rationalized. Control of women was deemed essential to the continued order of society. Women's lives, health and well-being were considered subordinate to the needs of men. This legacy continues to impact on us today.

One of the constants of European culture is a hatred of women. In fact there are many times when reading this book becomes quite painful, not to mention enraging. It's like reading a Nazi or colonialist propaganda tract about the superiority of Aryans, or whites, only in this case it's about men and women. In each case, the delineations are considered "natural", i.e., God's way.

The first essential fact to remember is that Eve tempted Adam and is always to be punished for her sin (even though it is this sin that allows for humans to be reproduced). Only Adam is in God's image. By the first century, Jewish men thanked God every morning for not creating them women (and so women must think conversely that they are punished for being created female).

Women were *lacking*. In words that preceded Freud by over 1,000 years, Aristotle wrote that women were incomplete men. "The female is, as it were, a deformed male, and the menstrual discharge is semen, though in an impure condition; i.e., it lacks one constituent and one only, the principle of Soul."

Because women were deformed men, it was believed that they did not need as much food to eat. Women and girls were given less and fed after the males. This continues in many societies to this day. Malnutrition would literally keep women the "weaker sex." Who knows? Perhaps this deliberate starvation is one of the reasons that from very early times women were supposed to be thin to be considered sexually attractive.

Women's menstruation was considered contaminated as far back as Biblical times. Menstrual blood spread disease; it contained magical powers of evil. It was responsible for the bad harvest or for sick livestock. No wonder a common name for menstruation is "the curse."

Sexual hatred of women goes way back. A Roman "satire" of an old prostitute reads:

Your filthy private gapes between
Shrunk buttocks like a scrawny cow's;
Your chest and wizened breasts are seen
Like horses' teats, and flabby shows
Your belly, and your lank thighs strung
To swollen calves, prove my wrath.



A London sweat shop in the 19th century

that goes with it—menstruation, and the magic and pain of childbirth—were things men could neither have nor do. An entire ideological justification had to be made to justify the treatment of women.

For centuries, we have been bought and sold, our very persons used to increase our families' fortunes. We were defined physically: our looks were of paramount importance. Our spiritual, emotional and mental states mattered little on their own. What was important was our relationship to men.

These may sound like sweeping statements. Yet, in reading *A History of Their Own, Women in Europe from Prehistory to the Present*, by Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, one is struck again and again by the consistency of society's vision and treatment of women. The Greeks, Hebrews, Romans, Celts and Christians all viewed women as defective. And it is from these societies that Europe developed.

We are now in a period where women in some parts of the world are breaking out en masse from

When I read this I could only think of the women-hating cartoons running through *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, and of all the jokes about women's stench.

Women's supposed "rampant sexuality" had to be controlled. One central way was through the enforcement of virginity. In Hebrew, Greek and Roman society, virginity was held up as the mightiest of virtues. Christian society appointed their greatest woman to be a virgin with a child. Obviously no woman could ever match Mary's ideal achievement. So far as we know, immaculate (notice: *very clean*) conception has not been duplicated (in this world, anyway).

Marriage was a political and social institution aimed at controlling women. Women (and through them children) were part of men's property. As such, it was insured that women would belong to and have sex only with their husbands. The "sexual double standard" was in effect from early on. Adultery was the sin of the wife, not of the husband (although, if caught "in the act," the man could be killed by the husband). Even if women chose not to marry and went into the church, they were married to, and thus the property of, Christ. Priests were expected to be celibate. But in the early days of the church, this was not defined as complete chastity. It was expected that even men of the church would have to "relieve their needs." Again, if caught, the women would be blamed for having led the men on.

Violence against women was an acceptable, completely understandable part of life. Rape, battering, sexual abuse were *caused by women*, men just had no choice. "A good horse and a bad horse need the spur. A good woman and a bad woman need the stick." (16th century French proverb)

Another continuing reality for women has been the double shift. The role of women as keeper of the home is ancient; the idea that this is women's only task is, on the other hand, relatively recent. The truth is that women have always worked, both inside the home and out, and since earliest times were paid less than men for that work. Peasants worked (and continue to do so) in the fields. Women of the town either did piecework or sold their goods in the markets. Women were servants, domestic workers, prostitutes. Women's work was and is essential to the economy.

It is interesting and particularly relevant to leftists that, even during times of enlightenment and intellectual and political upheaval, women's lives remained pretty much the same. At a time when men were defying the Catholic Church, and proclaiming the Protestant Reformation, their view towards women changed not at all. Women under Protestantism played the same role as under Catholicism. In fact, in some ways women were more constrained. The humanists of the Enlightenment, while talking about free rights and education for all (read: men),

left women out of the picture entirely. John Locke, one of the fathers of bourgeois democracy, championed men's right to freedom, while at the same time upholding the subjugation of women (and animals) to men. Women who tried to struggle against such views, such as Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, were vilified.

So-called progressive men—in the salons of the 17th century, revolutionaries of the 18th century, and radical intellectuals of the 19th century—ridiculed women who tried to break out of what men considered to be their "natural constraints." In fact, as time progressed and technology and more money freed some women from backbreaking labor, it became even more important for men to maintain women's domination. It was in the 19th century that the cult of motherhood and domesticity was raised to the level that we are fighting today.

The end of the 19th century saw the development of psychology and sexology. On the one hand, women's sexuality and sexual needs were acknowledged. Women's orgasms and masturbation were talked about openly. But women's pleasure was to be given only by men. Clitoral stimulation and masturbation were deemed masculine and thus not good for women. Women could be sexual, but only in the ways men desired. Thus increased sexual knowledge and sophistication turned into new limits on women.

Like their brothers of the past, men in the 1960s were little different when faced with the women's movement, their hostility is evident in the now famous statement "the best position for a woman is on her back." It is true that it is now acknowledged that women's *natural* place is not necessarily as subject to men, that women are not *naturally* stupider than men, but what else has really changed in men's attitudes? How anxious are they to really question their own upbringing and attitudes? How deeply do they want to question what they consider to be natural from what is just very deep inculcation?



This brings us to the fundamental challenge to traditional left thinking presented in these histories. The authors introduce their two volumes by saying:

The central thesis of this book is that gender has been the most important fact in shaping the lives of European women. Unlike men, who have been seen as divided by class, nation or historical era, women have traditionally been viewed first as women, a separate category of being. We came to this thesis reluctantly... We first assumed that differences between eras, between classes and between nations would be as important for women as they were for men... Our historical investigations proved this false... [for these factors] are outweighed by the similarities decreed by gender.

The primacy of gender has been the subject of debate among feminists and between feminists and more traditional Marxists for many years. Socialist feminists, Marxists and nationalists have all tried to define feminism and its relationship to class and national oppression. Too often, this has involved sterile formulations about what is primary or secondary, which inevitably would lead to the conclusion that gender *had* to be seen as secondary.

These ways of categorizing "contradictions" doesn't really make it and was never satisfying. My sense of the relationship of male supremacy and

women's oppression to historical developments was further altered after reading these books and their vivid portrayal of the continuity of women's lives. It's time for us to think in different terms—to look at contradictions perhaps in terms of intersecting spheres of influences; separate at some points, overlapping at others, but part of a whole picture of the organization of society.

This is the strength of Anderson and Zinsser's presentation, but it is also where they fall short. The sphere of gender relations is elaborately presented, but little is revealed about how class and national contradictions affect them. Although the class distinctions are acknowledged by having different chapters on women from different social sectors, nowhere is class society or women's place in it ever really analyzed.

Living in the U.S., one has to recognize and deal with the consequences of 400 years of colonialism and racism. It's impossible to discuss any aspect of this society without understanding the profound differences that exist in the experiences of white people and people of color. The authors don't discuss the impact of colonialist expansion, the "discovery of the New World," for example, on women of Europe, even though the dynamism of Europe after the 12th century was based on this expansion. The relationship of women of the colonizing nations of Europe to women of colonized nations is not examined. Because of this, a true look at the ties that bind women together versus the contradictions that keep us apart is obscured.

While these histories present a compelling argument about how little has changed in our lives through the centuries, we know that change has occurred. How did this come to pass? What are the threads of resistance that run through the ages? Who are our grandmothers who recognized so early on that the order given to them was not right? How did these women manage to find the strength and courage to keep going? How did they respond to the growing economic and political changes that allowed them to play more of a role?

Most women did not strike back. They went along with their proscribed roles as wife and mother. Did they accept them? We can only guess. Probably they felt as women do today, angry at times, more knowledgeable than they appeared, but accepting and, if not accepting, resigned to their womanhood.

Yet, as these books document, women always resisted their fate, trying to get around the reigning social and religious mores of the time. No matter what the ruling conventions, peasants, teachers, nuns, slaves and even rulers—in both their public and private lives—went against the accepted roles laid out for them. Anderson and Zinsser give names and faces to these often-forgotten heroines.

For example, there were moments when the

Joan of Arc



church did allow women a little more breathing space; when this happened more women flourished intellectually and politically. One of these women, Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (c.930 - c.990), wrote the only dramas composed in Europe from the fourth to the 11th century, as well as verse and history. Head abbess in Gandersheim, she was given permission to mint coins, have her own knights and court. A greatly learned woman, she continuously wrote about the "victory of the facile woman over the strong men... routed with confusion."

Christine de Pizan was a courtier (a woman of the court) in the early fifteenth century. Some consider her the mother of feminism:

"all things which are feasible and knowable, whether in the area of physical strength or in the wisdom of the mind and every virtue, are possible and easy for women to accomplish."

There are numerous examples of women rulers, thrust into power by birth and/or fortuitous power struggles. Catherine the Great of Russia or Queen Elizabeth I served the purposes of the ruling classes of their day and enlarged the strength of their empires, but in doing so also proved that women were capable of more than just having children.

Countless others broke out of the mold. But

whether they are known to us or not, women like Joan of Arc or the nuns of the Order of St. Clare, were unable to have lasting influence over the view of women and were themselves punished for their independence. Throughout the centuries the same preconception of women prevailed.

Although, as this book proves, there have always been feminists, it is only in this century that, for a whole variety of reasons (which could be a book in itself), women's demands for equality began to effect qualitative change. Suffragists like Christabel Pankhurst and revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg or Krupskaya can be considered the direct grandmothers of the women's liberation movement of the 60s and 70s.

More than twenty thousand years of history are not going to be easily erased. At every point where women begin to break out of our economic and/or political constraints, our servitude is reinforced ideologically. This was true in the 19th century and can be seen in the hostility towards feminism as well as the continued sexual objectification and rising violence against women that we see today.

Feminist analysis, such as that presented in *A History of Their Own* can help us understand, raise our consciousness and challenge our assumptions.

It's a great book - Go out and read it! □

FMLN, from p. 31

LF: First I want to give some overview of how we see the perspectives for the struggle in El Salvador. We see that we will have to be fighting in three camps. One will be the military confrontation in El Salvador. The second will be the struggle of the masses in El Salvador to keep the political space open and not allow the intentions of the ARENA government to eliminate all opposition in El Salvador. And the third camp is the international camp.

Within this camp we see two areas. One is the diplomatic area. In this area the ARENA government will try to put the FMLN on the defensive, for example, with this recent declaration from the five presidents in Costa Rica* that we condemn strongly. But in the solidarity movement, the ARENA government is totally excluded; they are rejected. And we consider this camp to be our rearguard, our strong support around the world. Since we are not

dependent on any other country, our dependence is on the solidarity movement, not only in the United States, but in Europe, Latin America and Canada as well. The struggle in El Salvador is going to be defined by the support we receive from the solidarity movement, and in the United States it is important for the entire progressive movement to understand that they can play a key role in the Salvadoran liberation process.

Why do we say that? First, because the main obstacle to resolving the war in El Salvador is the United States. Without U.S. support the ARENA government would fall very soon. So the responsibility for the progressive movement in the U.S. is greater than the responsibility of other solidarity movements around the world. In that sense, it is key for the U.S. solidarity movement to think about how to stop U.S. aid, how to stop U.S. involvement in El Salvador, with actions here. That's a fundamental political need of the Salvadoran revolution.

The second one is material support. We are practically maintaining this struggle with the support of the solidarity movement. And we have great expectations that we are going to continue this struggle until we liberate El Salvador; and we expect the solidarity movement to be with us through the whole process. □

* On December 12, the presidents of the five Central American governments met in San Jose, Costa Rica and issued a joint statement recognizing the legitimacy of the Cristiani government and calling on the FMLN to disarm and integrate themselves into the political process in El Salvador.

DYKETACTICS, from p. 21

wanted desires comes true, and a cure is found for AIDS. Will that signal the demise of our movement? Will we all go home, and lead happy lives from here on out? Of course not. If we were fighting literally only for our lives, maybe a number of us (particularly men?) would drop out, and attempt to go on "as usual." But hopefully, what we've begun to re-establish in these worst of times, in the wake of thousands of deaths in our community, is a movement for freedom. That is not to deny or belittle that we are, in fact, fighting to live. That is one of the most compelling elements of our movement. But I think lesbians, especially, see the depths of the problems we face as gays and lesbians, which go beyond finding a cure for AIDS.

A LESBIAN MOVEMENT?

In other attempts to bring women back into focus, some lesbians have initiated support services for women only, such as the Women's Cancer Resource Center in Oakland, California. The Resource Center is an attempt not only to provide much needed services in a feminist environment, but also to raise awareness that in the U.S. alone, 500,000 women will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and 42,000 women will die from breast cancer. If ever we thought that AIDS was the only epidemic raging in our community, these statistics forced us to look again. We found that they did not just reflect a grim piece of 20th century reality, but pointed to the intense devaluation of women's lives.

Another place where lesbians are active, yet not very visible, is in the abortion rights movement. Lesbians rank high in the fight against this organized right-wing attack. Simultaneously many lesbians, while abhorring the erosion of abortion rights as an attack on women, do not feel motivated to join a movement where lesbian identity and issues are downplayed by the predominant mainstream feminist organizations. So how do we as lesbians function as a part of this movement?

We've made various attempts to project a more multi-faceted view of reproductive rights. We've tried to connect the right-wing's stance against abortion and birth control with their hatred of homosexuality. Some of us purposely wear lesbian t-shirts and buttons to rallies and clinic defenses. These subtle statements have been meant to convey our pride, not just to our foes, but to our allies as well. We've also struggled with gay men we work with in other organizations to take this issue seriously. For us, we've argued, this is a life and death issue, about controlling our bodies and our sexuality. Gay men have, with some regularity, begun to show their support by coming to abortion clinic defenses and

demonstrations. Notably, the Chicago and New York chapters of ACT-UP have organized joint actions with local reproductive rights organizations in an effort to visibly connect the issues.

Still, many of us are less than satisfied with our role as lesbians in the reproductive rights movement. We are compelled to get involved because the attack on abortion represents to us one of the most significant organized attempts to put women back under the lock-and-key of men. Yet once again, we find ourselves struggling to integrate our concerns as lesbians into a movement which, no matter how much it addresses the issues we raise, will never be a forum we can count on to promote lesbian liberation as its primary goal.

We have felt powerful on the occasions when we've been successful in putting forth lesbian politics. We've marched in the "Dykes from Hell" contingent in the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. We've fought to be spokespeople for gay and lesbian demonstrations such as the anniversary of the White Night Riot, and the "Stop AIDS Now or Else" actions on the Golden Gate Bridge and elsewhere. In Atlanta, lesbians have helped to lead a campaign against anti-sodomy laws, which name lesbianism along with male homosexuality, as illegal. We've pointed to our invisibility, and strengthened the focus of countless leaflets, news reports, and analyses, by including politics about lesbians.

Through these efforts, lesbians are in fact defining the potential look and shape of a lesbian movement. Doing this, whether within other associated movements or autonomously, has posed many challenges. We know a vibrant lesbian movement will not pop up overnight, or spring into action because we will it into being. Still, our efforts in this direction *do* make a difference.

Perhaps even more important is that we discuss these and other ideas in present-day "consciousness raisers," to identify what's missing, and articulate a vision that answers both our needs, and desires. We're faced with the not-so-simple task of defining lesbian liberation. Drawing up a list is a start: adequate and non-biased health care, an end to hate-inspired violence against lesbians and women, custody of our children, non-discrimination on the job, respect for those who choose not to bear or raise children, power over our lives and in the world. But of course lesbian liberation means much more than any list item, or the sum of the whole.

Defining lesbian liberation requires searching the roots of our movements. Because hatred of women forms a basis for lesbian oppression, we must revive and *revise* feminism to be at the heart of our liberation—challenging male domination, and the basic organization of society. Mixing feminism, activism and lesbian pride is a formula to perfect for the future! □

On November 30, 1989, the longest sedition trial in U.S. history came to an end with a significant victory for the Ohio 7. Raymond Luc Levasseur, Patricia Gros Levasseur and Richard Williams were found innocent of seditious conspiracy charges by a jury in Springfield, MA. In addition, the jury failed to reach a verdict on charges of Racketeering and Corrupt Influences (RICO) and the judge declared a mistrial. Five days later, the U.S. government announced that it would not seek a new trial on the RICO charges.

The trial lasted 97 days, called 250 witnesses and cost the government a minimum of \$10 million (the real costs may be as high as \$60 million). The three defendants were charged with "attempting to overthrow the U.S. government by force," and with membership in two clandestine organizations, the United Freedom Front and the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit, which carried out armed attacks from 1976 to 1984 against government and corporate targets implicated in repression in Central America and Southern Africa.

At the time the charges were brought against them, Ray and Richard were serving 45-year sentences and Pat a 3-1/2 year term. The remaining members of the Ohio 7 are serving sentences as follows: Jaan Karl Laaman and Thomas Manning, 90 years; and Barbara Curzi-Laaman and Carol Manning, 15 years each. Richard Williams now faces a retrial in New Jersey on charges of murdering a state trooper.

The defeat of the seditious conspiracy and RICO indictments in this case represents a serious setback to the government's attempts to intimidate and criminalize political resistance. We extend our congratulations and love to the Ohio 7. We are pleased to reprint excerpts from Ray Levasseur's moving closing address to the jury.

MY FIRST ACT IN THESE CONSPIRACIES THE GOVERNMENT SAYS I'M A part of was being born into a particular class of exploited workers. What I refer to as the laboring class. I can trace my anger back that far. Back to the insufficient wages and working conditions that I experienced.

Had I sided with the rich and powerful I probably wouldn't be here today. I would have been commended and awarded like I was when I was in Vietnam. But the war changed me. My values remained the same, but my outlook changed. You can't participate in an illegal and immoral war and it not have an impact on a young person. We were turning Vietnam into a massive graveyard. There are emotional scars to bear from an experience like that.

If the government wants to consider me a traitor, then so be it. But I'd rather be considered a traitor to my country than to my class. That's honestly how I feel. I didn't feel that way in 1967 when I went to Vietnam, but that's how I've felt for a long time. I feel that way today.

I don't want to pay a blind allegiance to a system that kills my own people, whether they're killing them in El Salvador or the streets of New York City; whether they're killing them with lynch mobs, police bullets, asbestos poisoning or pesticides. My commitment is to my class and those who are oppressed.

Your presence here is an important reason why I decided to participate in this trial. I still retain a strong belief in the humanity of people, in the basic goodness which exists in most people, and in your sense of justice.

But I have no faith in the criminal justice system. None. Judges? Forget it. Prosecutors? Forget it. I don't have any faith in them. Prison administrators? I don't have any faith in anybody who's going to beat me on the head. FBI agents and police? None.

Any faith I have in any part of this process at this point lies with you people. I've seen this system destroy too many of its victims. I've seen it hurt, abuse, discard, exploit and kill. And I've seen it with these eyes. I could have sat out this trial in a prison cell, and I almost did that. I'm in prison anyways. But the more I thought about it the more incensed I became with

Victory In Ohio 7 Trial



the government's scheme of trying to criminalize my life with the label of racketeer and corruption.

So when faced with trial I decided to do what I've done for over 20 years. Organize. To alert people in our communities and movements to the danger of this type of prosecution; to build support and to raise political and human rights issues presented by a trial of this nature. And this is a political trial.

I want to add my voice to those of all people who suffer and die because of this government's foreign and domestic policies. I am not about to let this government take the issue of human rights and denigrate it to an issue of criminality in this trial.

As long as this government is responsible for committing crimes against humanity and war crimes, I'm going to organize and fight them until I don't have any breath left in this life.

They can't inflict enough pain on me or bury me deep enough in their penitentiary cells that I won't raise my voice or my fist in defiance.

The charges that I am a racketeer are a lie. What I call the bright shining lie of government hypocrisy

they want to scare the hell out of a lot of other people.

I'm not a criminal. I don't break into people's homes. I don't steal their paychecks. I'm a revolutionary and everything that means. One thing it means, as Che said, "it takes great love to be a revolutionary."

In 1975, in a letter I wrote to my wife, which the FBI seized and is in evidence, I said, "My love is for the oppressed, Black, Brown, Native American, poor whites, cleaning women, the millions of under and unemployed laborers whose hands earn their living when they can get it, woodsmen, those on welfare, in the prison camps, those sleeping in the parks, on the waterfront, burned out, farm workers, laundry workers, food packers."

In this letter I also referred to another of Che's statements: "People without hatred cannot vanquish a brutal enemy." Am I angry? Yes, I am. Can I hate? Yes, I can. I hate poverty and racism and I hate injustice and I'll do whatever has to be done to make some contribution to doing something about it.

I hate those who inflict violence and fear and hunger on the people I love. And it makes no difference whether the victims are peasants in El Salvador or migrant workers in California.

I am charged with membership in the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit and the United Freedom Front. I'm here to defend those organizations. I'm here to defend what they are a part of. The actions of the SM-JJU and UFF helped bring public attention to the role the U.S. government, its military and certain corporations with headquarters in the United States play in the oppression of our people.

Martin Luther King said there is nothing wrong with a traffic light that says you have to stop for a red light. But when a fire is raging, the fire truck goes right through the red light. He added that people all over the world are bleeding to death from deep social and economic wounds. They need brigades of ambulance drivers who will have to ignore the red lights of the present system. Martin Luther King advocated and participated in civil disobedience and for his commitment he was destroyed.

I believe in civil disobedience when the time, place and conditions warrant it. But I also believe in civil resistance. By that I mean that we cannot let the illegal and immoral acts of our own government go unpunished. If it takes armed actions or armed resistance to make this government accountable to the needs of the people, then it isn't just what should be done, it will be done.

The history of the human race has been a struggle. A struggle for the removal of the physical and sometimes spiritual oppression that exists among so many of us. I feel I would have failed had I not made a contribution to that struggle. I'll always be glad I did. □



The Ohio 7:

(seated, left to right: Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi-Laaman, Carol Manning, Pat Gros Levasseur; standing, left to right: Richard Williams, Tom Manning, Raymond Luc Levasseur)

and deceit. I'm not a drug dealer. I'm not an arsonist for hire. I'm not a murderer. I don't engage in extortion. I don't run gambling houses and I don't infiltrate legitimate businesses to corrupt them. That's not me. I've never done anything for my own personal gain or profit in the 21 years I've been politically active. Nothing.

The government knows this. What's important to them and their own propaganda is a conviction of activists and revolutionaries under the RICO laws. They want to discredit us. They want to criminalize us. They want to criminalize those who present a serious opposition to them and their policies. And

WRITE THROUGH THE WALLS

The U.S. government says there are no political prisoners or POWs in this country. Yet the partial list below shows this claim is a complete lie. We urge you to write them and to send literature. These women and men represent the best of the movement. Make their struggle yours. "The Real Dragon" sponsors a continuing book drive to political prisoners and POWs. For more information or to send contributions write: POB 3294, Berkeley, CA 94703-9901.

Puerto Rican Prisoners of War

Edwin Cortes #92153-024
Ricardo Jimenez #88967-024 A-2
Alberto Rodríguez #92150-024 B-3
FCI Lewisburg
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Lewisburg, PA 17837

Carlos Alberto Torres #88976-024
FCI Talladega
902 Renfro (Gamma-A)
Talladega, AL 35160

Luis Rosa #NO2743
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Menard, IL 62259

Elizam Escobar #88969-024
FCI Colorado Unit
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3901 Klein Blvd
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Haydeé Beltrán #88462-024
Dylcia Pagán #88971-024
Lucy Rodríguez #88973-024
Alejandrina Torres #92152-024
Carmen Valentín #88974-024
FCI Pleasanton
5701 8th Street
Camp Parks
Dublin, CA 94566

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Filiberto Ojeda Rios #03167-069
MCC New York
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Julio Veras y Degadillo
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ECI Petersburg
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Southport Correctional Facility
Box 2000
Pine City, NY 14871

Jalil A. Muntaqin #77-A-4283
s/n Anthony Bottom
Greenhaven State Prison
Drawer B
Stormville, NY 12582-0010

Sundiata Acoli #39794-066
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Leavenworth, KS 66048

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Tehachapi, CA 93581

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Basheer Hameed #82-A-6313
s/n James York
Mohaman Koti #80-A-808
Shawangunk Corr. Facility
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Wallkill, NY 12589

Teddy (Jah) Heath #75-A-0139
Sullivan Corr. Facility
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Wende Correctional Facility
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s/n Nathaniel Burns
Kojo Bomani Sababu #39384-66
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Ramona Johnson Africa #7564
Debbi Sims Africa #6307
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Merle Austin Africa #6306
Janet Holloway Africa #6308
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Delbert Orr Africa #M4985
Carlos Perez Africa #M7400
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Timothy Blunk #233-410
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EL SALVADOR

If You Lived Under
Fascist Rule, You'd
Be Rebelling, Too.

*ARENA is a fascist party
modeled after the Nazis
[. . .] D'Aubuisson is a
pathological killer.*

—Robert White, Former U.S.
Ambassador to El Salvador



Trying to crush the revolt, the Salvadoran Armed Forces have turned their massive fire-power on civilians in the poorest and most densely populated neighborhoods of San Salvador.

FMLN Accompanies the People Toward Victory

The FMLN's national offensive has rocked the US-backed dictatorship and raised the hopes of El Salvador's people for freedom and social justice. The offensive is sure to intensify, until ARENA and its death squads are driven from power.

For their lives and for their freedom, El Salvador's people need your support *now*.

Help fund FMLN *Emergency Mobile Hospitals* now being readied to provide treatment to injured FMLN members and civilians in areas under heavy government attack.

Contribute to the Freedom Struggle In El Salvador



FMLN ranks
have swollen
with new
volunteers since
the offensive
began
November 11,
1989.

Your Contribution Is Urgently Needed to Save Lives

Please make your check payable to "The Bravo Fund".

Yes, I want to save lives in El Salvador! I enclose a check to "The Bravo Fund" for the construction of FMLN emergency mobile hospitals, in the amount of:

___ \$1,000 ___ \$500 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$25 ___ other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

Mail to: The Bravo Fund P.O. Box 460586 San Francisco, CA 94146 (415) 647-9433

(Contributions are not tax-deductible.)

The Bravo Fund: A Project of the U.S.-El Salvador Institute for Democratic Development.

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150 Years of U.S. Invasion

GET OUT STAY OUT

